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# Hostage to Outcome Based Education: A case study of a superintendent's stress and suicide

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**Hostage to Outcome Based Education: A case study of a superintendent's stress and suicide**

by

**Leonard Victor Larsen**

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Major: Education (Educational Administration)**

**Major Professor: William K. Poston, Jr.**

**Iowa State University**

**Ames, Iowa**

**2000**

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**Graduate College  
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**This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation of  
Leonard Victor Larsen  
has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University**

Signature was redacted for privacy.

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**Major Professor**

Signature was redacted for privacy.

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**For the Major Program**

Signature was redacted for privacy.

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**For the Graduate College**

**Dedicated to my wife, Mary Jo,  
and my three children, Toby, Margaret, and Emily,  
who encouraged me along this lengthy journey,  
and to the memory of my sister, Chris, who lived her life as she wished.**

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*The Man Who Was Tired of Life*

*To whom can I speak today?  
Brothers are evil  
And the friends of today unlovable.*

*To whom can I speak today?  
Gentleness has perished  
And the violent man has come down on everyone.*

*To whom can I speak today?  
The wrong which roams the earth,  
There is no end to it.*

*Death is in my sight today  
As when a man desires to see home  
When he has spent many years in captivity.*

*—Anonymous  
(c. 1990 B.C., translated by R. O. Faulkner)*

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

"If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5). *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* proclaimed, with this now famous line, the need for educational change in America. What the commission did not understand was that it had unleashed a war whose battles would be fought throughout the nation. Confrontation would occur in state legislatures, departments of education, universities, newspapers and journals, churches, local school board elections, and classrooms. This was to be a cultural war and in some cases a very personal war.

The release of *A Nation at Risk* sent forth a storm of reforms and innovations. According to Darling-Hammond (1993), "Over the last decade, hundreds of pieces of legislation have sought to improve schools by adding course requirements, increasing testing requirements, mandating new curriculum guidelines, and requiring new management processes for schools and districts" (p. 753). A key statement in *A Nation at Risk* (1983) described the quality of present day graduates of the time: "The average graduate of our schools and colleges today is not as well-educated as the average graduate of 25 or 35 years ago, when a much smaller proportion of our population completed high school and college" (National Commission on Education, 1983, p. 11). One reform, Outcome Based Education (OBE), became the popular vehicle by which individual students would purportedly arrive at those goals. William Spady became the main proponent of OBE. According to Spady and Marshall (1991), "Outcome based education is founded on three basic premises: 1) all students can learn and succeed—but not on the same day in the same way, 2) success breeds success, and 3) schools control the conditions of success" (p. 67). Individual states and school districts would vary on their operational definitions of OBE. In 1991 the

Minnesota Department of Education outlined these four components of their OBE: 1) what is to be learned is clearly identified; 2) learners' progress is based on demonstrated achievement; 3) multiple instructional and assessment strategies are available to meet the needs of each learner; and 4) time and assistance are provided for each learner to reach maximum potential (Manatt, 1995, p. 8).

Thus, change was called for if America wanted to revitalize its public schools. Change was needed if "Johnny" was to be taught to read on grade level. Reforms called for all students to be given a fair opportunity to learn. To carry the day for this movement, educational leaders were charged with bringing about change, to be on the cutting edge, receive the accolade, and be dubbed a "change agent." Superintendents were given the charge to lead their school districts into the 21<sup>st</sup> century armed with the tenets of OBE. However, to be on the cutting edge would take on ironic overtones, as in some cases change came at a very high price.

Despite the massive wave of popularity, it is important to note that not everyone in the nation saw sweeping and rapid educational reform as a step forward, and OBE was viewed with particular skepticism. Opponents like Connecticut's leading OBE critic, Kay Wall, a founder of Save Our Schools, voiced objections based on academic grounds. Wall maintained OBE would force academic mediocrity on children (Frahm, 1994). The executive director of the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed, Jr., agreed with Wall on the harmful educational effects of OBE, proposing instead a return to the "basics" in the curriculum. Reed maintained, "The three R's [reading, writing, and arithmetic] that once dominated the curriculum in public schools have been whittled away by values clarification, multiculturalism, human sexuality courses, and outcome based education" (Reed, 1993, p. 18).

Objection on religious grounds became a banner under which the OBE opponents rallied. Their personal and family values were seen as under attack by the OBE reforms and were in need

of defense. Some even viewed OBE as the work of the devil. Robert Simonds, leader of Citizens for Excellence in Education, proclaimed, "Affective learning would occupy 47% of a typical OBE curriculum and...come complete with witchcraft, shamanism, black magic, necromancy (talking to the dead), hypnotism, and psychological manipulation of children's minds" (Kaplan, 1994, p. K6).

Many fundamentalist Christian leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Mel and Norma Gabler, and Phyllis Schlafly opposed reform changes labeling them as the "new secular humanism" (Manatt, 1995). The Religious Right called their members into action. Organizations under the leadership of people including Jerry Falwell (the Moral Majority), Pat Robertson (Christian Coalition), and Phyllis Schlafly (Eagle Forum) were placed into action. Their mission was to expose OBE and other educational initiatives for what they supposedly were—indoctrination for a new world order—and stop them. It was their nation that was at risk.

Superintendents were called on by *A Nation at Risk* to play "a crucial role in developing school and community support for the reforms we propose" (p. 32). Superintendents were expected to "walk the point" for the reforms, but organizations opposing the reforms had other ideas for school leaders. Instead of visionary reforms (e.g., critical thinking, promoting self-esteem, cooperative learning, whole language, global education, multicultural-nonsexist education, and outcome based education), the general consensus was that curriculum must return to the basics: the three R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The Christian Coalition called for active political participation of parents. They advocated that parents' rights would be served if like-minded school board members would be elected. Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings as well as school board meetings would become their avenue of expression. The president of Excellence in Education and also the founder and president of the National Association of

Christian Educators, Robert Simonds (1993), warned school leaders by stating, "Wake-up calls for superintendents may be in order" (p. 22).

What stresses would be generated by the "wake-up call" if it went out to an individual superintendent who had firm Christian beliefs but professional beliefs aligned with OBE? New pressures would be asserted on the superintendent as the community polarized into vocal camps. This was one superintendent's position in the 1990s.

Today's superintendents normally face multiple stresses, even without adding new ones: "Setting the direction for a school district, balancing multimillion dollar budgets, managing personnel systems, and dealing with highly inflammatory political issues and the demands of a school bureaucracy, all in the constant view of the media and the public, is a highly stressful job!" (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996, p. 68).

Clearly, stress is strongly identified with the job description of the position of superintendent. In *Becoming a Superintendent*, Chapman and Chapman (1997) caution their readers, "The harsh realities of the superintendency, including politics, ethics, and immorality, are land mines waiting to explode under unwary feet" (p. 217). Compound the normal stresses of the everyday duties of the superintendent with a situation involving conflicts of personal beliefs, and the situation becomes a dangerous one. Senge (1990) has foreshadowed this outcome to his readers in his leadership classic, *The Fifth Discipline*:

Such visionary crisis managers often become tragic figures. Their tragedy stems from the depth and genuineness of their vision. They often are truly committed to noble aspirations. But noble aspirations are not enough to overcome systemic forces contrary to the vision. (p. 355)



Konnert and Augenstein (1990) summarize in less noble but no less graphic and frank terms: "When things go wrong in a district, it is usually the superintendent who pays the price" (p. 51). In this cultural war, as with any war, there would be casualties.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of this investigation is to examine the confluence of forces, events, and stresses that acted on one superintendent at a certain time and in a certain school district. Proponents of Outcome Based Education (OBE) did not foresee the intensity of the challenges that lay ahead. In a blistering article on the Christian Right, George Kaplan (1994) provided a postmortem of the dramatic decline of the OBE reform movement: "The arrival in force of the outcome based education could not have come at a better time for the new Christian Right," declared Kaplan (p. K6).

Education reformers provided the Christian Right with an opportunity to flex their political muscle. "Outcome based education is doomed to failure not because it's a bad idea, but because the name is a smokescreen for an even more liberal agenda of undefined outcomes, opening a Pandora's box," predicted Robert Simonds (1992, p. 22). The blame is not wholly placed on the Christian Right. Also, seemingly in reference to Simonds' metaphorical "Pandora's box," Kaplan goes on to state, "Nor could its contents (OBE), however curious they may have appeared to some analysts, have been more precisely calibrated to fuel the political appetites of education's most vehement naysayers" (p. K6).

As the foregoing history reveals, OBE was doomed to failure by a flawed design and by opposition from the Christian Right. Forces against OBE mobilized at the state level and cultural battles raged. In Connecticut, the reform plan including an OBE component failed. Attacks also took place in other states including Pennsylvania, Colorado, Wyoming, and Iowa (Manatt, 1995).

In a postmortem of state educational departments' OBE efforts, Frahm (1994) concluded, "In the end they failed because the reformers tried to do too much.... Armed only with a ponderous, jargon-laden bill, they were defenseless when the critics attacked" (p. 159).

Simonds (1993) again made a prediction as he threw down the political gauntlet: "For most Americans, and certainly for me, forcing the left-wing educational extremists' agenda upon our innocent school children is unacceptable. I believe that agenda soon will be history" (p. 19).

What about superintendents in the trenches? Who else would be "history" by the end of this cultural war? Superintendents were called to lead their districts into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by promoting and instituting OBE reforms. What would be waiting for the individual superintendent who is the subject of this case study, as he blew his whistle and led his school district over the top? What kind of cultural fire would that superintendent face? What kind of negative stress would be produced by the combination of pro- and anti-OBE forces on a superintendent trying to bring about change?

The existence and negative effects of stress have been a great concern in our modern society. More than 100,000 books, magazines, and journal articles have been written about stress (Gmelch, 1993). Since 1980, over 70 studies have explored the abuses, responses, and consequences of administrative stress in particular. The research on stress in schools has examined the stages of stress from the nature of stress, types and sources of stress, responses to stress, and the consequences of stress (Gmelch, 1991).

As the educational community promoted OBE, change was encouraged, but the negative stress effects upon the superintendent were not envisioned. A superintendent supporting OBE at this historical juncture would encounter unique levels and sources of stress. Larry Cuban (1993) captures the feeling of the maelstrom that was OBE reform in the 1990s: "National goals, standards, and tests are rushing forward like an 18-wheeler careening down a steep grade" (p.

183). Educational reformers did not calculate the stressful consequences both inside and outside the local school district for a superintendent personally and professionally embroiled in an OBE controversy, as was the situation for the superintendent in this case study.

How did organized forces on both sides of the OBE issue contribute to the controversy in his particular community? What stress factors faced by this superintendent could be attributed to the OBE controversy, and were these stresses so great as to pose a physical and mental danger to this individual superintendent? What would be the long-term consequences of that negative stress on the mental and physical well-being of this individual superintendent in the work place? The local superintendent, perhaps even more than the nation's children, may be the one truly "at risk," as this study reveals.

Educational research is needed to produce a general understanding of how stress affects a school superintendent. An inquiry using a qualitative case study method provides a historical description of what occurred in a particular case at this point in educational history. Insights generated by this study may be used to prepare superintendents on how to avoid becoming a casualty in cultural wars. While OBE has been a terrible controversy across America, it also presents an opportune vehicle for studying a particular case of the effect of stress on a superintendent in the early 1990s when the OBE controversy raged in his school district and community.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Stake (1995) believes a case should be selected for *both* its "commonality" and for its "uniqueness" (p. 1). The purpose of this study is to examine a school superintendent (commonality) under a dangerous amount of stress with results that brought about litigation (uniqueness). This case study will focus on a superintendent supporting Outcome Based Education

in his school district during the early 1990s, and the challenges he encountered through community opposition to OBE.

This study will add to the understanding of the complexity of promoting educational change by providing a description of historical events and issues employing a qualitative case study design. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) state, "Qualitative inquiry generally searches for 'understanding' of some phenomenon" (p. 16). Case study design (Yin, 1993) will be used to investigate causal relationships (e.g., historical events and stress on the superintendent) and will also provide "contextual information" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998) to improve knowledge concerning the negative effects of stress on a school superintendent.

Since the effects of stress on an individual vary depending on personal factors, a person's response to stress may be positive or negative. Gmelch (1991) states, "While the popular connotation is that stress is unpleasant or negative, it can be positive as well" (p. 4). In relation to this qualitative study, the researcher will be "interested not only in the physical events and behavior that is taking place, but also in how the participants in this study make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behavior" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 17). To promote an understanding of stress experienced by school administrators, Gmelch (1991) developed a theoretical model to explain the phenomenon of managerial stress and work relationships. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) in a discussion hold that "qualitative studies may seek to investigate or expand some aspect of a theoretical model" (p. 20) to expand a study's outcomes. Gmelch's administrative stress model will be employed in this case study to guide the researcher's interpretations. The case study will also incorporate the use of workers' compensation law and rulings in its design of a practical standard to guide the researcher in measuring stress present in a historical situation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following were objectives of the study:

1. Develop a chronological narrative and a timeline of events in this case study.
2. Develop a matrix of superintendents' responses to stress (gathered from depositions) to increase the understanding of the dynamics of administrative negative stress.
3. Compare and contrast the case superintendent's responses to the responses predicted in the stages of Gmelch's administrative stress model.
4. Compare and contrast the consequences of a superintendent's reaction to negative stress by developing and applying a measure based on workers' compensation law.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What was the role of pro- and anti-Outcome Based Education (OBE) forces during the early 1990s present on the national, state, and in the selected community level?
2. What kind of negative stress was produced by the combination of pro- and anti-OBE forces on this case study's superintendent trying to bring about change?
3. What would be the consequences of negative stress on the mental and physical well-being of this case study's superintendent?
4. Does the selected superintendent's responses to negative stress fit the responses predicted by Gmelch's administrative stress model?

### **Basic Assumptions**

The basic assumptions for this study are the following:

1. The researcher will have access to all necessary documents concerning the events that can be recovered.

2. Interviewees will speak openly and honestly.
3. Testimony given under oath is truthful.
4. Court decisions were made for the purpose of serving justice.
5. The process of conducting this case study will serve the cause of providing contextual information to improve knowledge concerning the negative effects of stress on a school superintendent.

### **Delimitations**

Following are delimitations for this study:

1. Pseudonyms will be used for people, places, and organizations in written reports and oral presentations of this research.
2. Dates will be represented in general terms to anonymize the study.
3. The sources that could lead to the loss of confidentiality will not be cited in the bibliography section of the dissertation but will be maintained by the researcher as part of a necessary audit trail for the study, available only on a "need-to-know" basis to the researcher's committee members.
4. This investigation will focus on the events occurring in the early 1990s, primarily in a particular community.
5. Interview subjects may be unable or unwilling to be interviewed due to the ongoing legal appeals or a desire not to relive the past.
6. The family of the superintendent will not be interviewed.

### **Outline of Procedure**

The study will proceed as follows:

1. Submit Human Subject Release to the Graduate College for approval.
2. Conduct a historical case study. This type of case study usually relies heavily upon interviews and documents (Borg & Gall, 1989).
3. Gather and validate data. With the exception of research interviews, sources of data will be publicly accessible ones: court records, school records, local newspapers, community organizational communications, and state department of education documents.
4. Develop a chronological narrative and a timeline of events.
5. Develop a superintendent stress-response matrix.
6. Develop a stress-standard based on the workers' compensation legal theory.
7. Analyze the data using Gmelch's administrative stress model, stress-response matrix, and stress-standard; organize according to salient issues.
8. Draw tentative conclusions.
9. Finalize the completed report.

### **Definitions**

**Affidavit:** "A written or printed declaration or statement of facts, made voluntarily, and confirmed by the oath or affirmation of the party making it, taken before a person having authority to administer such oath or affirmation" (Black, 1990, p. 58).

**Deposition:** "A pretrial discovery device by which one party asks oral questions of the other party or of a witness for the other party. The deposition is conducted under oath outside of the

courtroom, usually in one of the lawyers' offices. A transcript—word for word account—is made of the deposition" (Black, 1990, p. 440).

**Mental state:** "Capacity or condition of one's mind in terms of ability to do or not do a certain act" (Black, 1990, p. 986).

**Standard:** "A measure or rule applicable in legal cases" (Black, 1990, p. 1404).

**Testimony:** "Evidence given by a competent witness under oath or affirmation; as distinguished from evidence derived from writings, and other sources. Testimony properly means only such evidence as is delivered by a witness on the trial of a cause, either orally or in the form of affidavits or depositions" (Black, 1990, p. 1476).

**Walking the point:** The position of being the rifleman alone and out in front of a squad during the Vietnam War (Dutcher, 1999).

**Workers' Compensation Acts:** "State and federal statutes which provide for fixed awards to employees or their dependents in case of employment related accidents and diseases, dispensing with proof of negligence and legal actions. The effect of most workers' compensation acts is to make the employer strictly liable to an employee for injuries sustained by the employee which arise out of and in the course of employment" (Black, 1990, p. 1605).



## **CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This review of literature will focus on five general topics: 1) an examination of the appropriateness of qualitative research for this project; 2) the development of Outcome Based Education (OBE) and its creator, William G. Spady; 3) the examination of the Religious Right and its criticisms of OBE; 4) the exploration of existing knowledge and theories about administrative stress; and 5) an examination of job stress and workers' compensation case law.

### **Qualitative Research**

It is important for this chapter to discuss the qualitative research process and its value for achieving the objectives of this study, as stated in Chapter I: "Proponents of qualitative research designs do best by emphasizing the promise of quality, depth and richness in the research findings" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 19). A general review of the qualitative approach will be conducted to provide a reasoned explanation of why this methodology is a good fit for the nature and goals of this research endeavor: a case study.

Scientific inquiry can be placed in two basic categories: quantitative and qualitative. The literature contains an extensive discussion of the differences between the two approaches (Borg & Gall, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998; Gay, 1996; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Stake, 1995; and Wolcott, 1994). Table 1 (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 7) provides a helpful summary of the characteristics of the qualitative mode of inquiry.

Although definitions of qualitative research vary among researchers, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) provide a workable definition:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in

Table 1. Qualitative modes of inquiry

---

**Qualitative mode**


---

**Assumptions:**

Reality is socially constructed  
 Primacy of subject matter  
 Variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure  
 Emic (insider's point of view)

**Purpose:**

Contextualization  
 Interpretation  
 Understanding actors' perceptions

**Approach:**

Ends with hypotheses and grounded theory  
 Emergence and portrayal  
 Naturalistic  
 Inductive  
 Searches for patterns  
 Seeks pluralism, complexity  
 Makes minor use of numerical indices  
 Descriptive write-up

**Researcher role:**

Personal involvement and partiality  
 Empathic understanding

---

their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, interview, and historical—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p. 3)

The qualitative method of inquiry appears to be the most appropriate method for obtaining answers to this study's particular research questions because "openness of qualitative inquiry

allows the researcher to approach the inherent complexity of social interaction and to do justice to that complexity" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 7). Using a qualitative approach will provide rigor to this research because, according to Marshall and Rossman (1989), qualitative research's strengths are "demonstrated for research that is exploratory or descriptive and that stresses the importance of context, setting, and subject's frame of reference" (p. 46). Perception of stress by the individual is very important in any discussion of the issue of stress, and in this study, how the forces of the community, the OBE movement, and the Christian Right were perceived as contributing to it—and are perceived now, in retrospect, some years later.

Maslach (1978) attempted to learn more about professionals under stress. She stated: "The problem is best understood and modified in terms of the social and situation sources of the job-related stresses" (p. 58). The use of qualitative research can enable this inquiry to uncover and understand the effects of stress on an individual affected by the OBE controversy.

### **Case study methodology**

Within this qualitative approach, a case study methodology will be implemented. Berg (1998) promotes the use of case studies as a methodological approach when he states, "Case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions" (p. 212). Yin (1989) supports the utilization of the case study methodology when he suggests, "In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context" (p. 13). Addressing the "hows" and "whys" is an important aspect to answering the research questions enumerated in Chapter I of this document. As Stake (1988) maintains, "A case study

that portrays an educational problem in all its personal and social complexity is a precious discovery" (p. 254).

### **Outcome Based Education and William G. Spady**

Outcome Based Education (OBE) is based on two systematic approaches to instruction and assessment, competency-based education and mastery learning (Towers, 1994). While competency-based education is based on general efforts to define and evaluate student performance, mastery learning is more of an instructional process.

The philosophy of mastery learning has its roots in western civilization. Block, Efthim, and Burns (1989) trace the supports for the movement to the classic works of Comenius, Pestalozzi, and Herbart. In more recent times, Carroll (1963) is credited by Bloom (1981) for creating the modern model of mastery learning. Carroll's construct supported the concept of varying time and instruction to match the individual student's learning rate, resulting in the premise that "all students can learn." If the time is not adjusted, scores would be normally distributed. If the time was adjusted to accommodate the student's need, the bell curve would turn into "J-curve," which would demonstrate an acceleration of achievement. Benjamin S. Bloom in the late 1960s transformed Carroll's conceptual model of school learning into a working model for mastery learning (Block, Efthim, & Burns, 1989). Bloom (1981) declared:

We are expressing the view that, given sufficient time (appropriate types of help), 95 percent of students (the top 5 percent + the next 90 percent) can learn a subject up to a high level of mastery. We are convinced that the grade of A as an index of mastery of a subject can, under appropriate conditions, be achieved by up to 95 percent of the students in a class. (p. 158)

The mastery-learning model called for systematic feedback-corrective procedures in the mastery learning process (Bloom, 1981). A subject would be broken down into smaller units with students testing at the end of each unit. The students who passed the tests on the first attempt would be provided enrichment activities or act as tutors as they waited for the corrected students to catch up. Then the group would move together to the next learning unit.

After experiencing both success and failure, educators involved in implementing district-wide mastery-learning sensed the need for a high-powered model. This need resulted in the birth of Outcome Based Education (Desmond, 1996), and William G. Spady has become linked with the OBE as its conceptual father. Spady served as associate executive director of the American Association of School Administrators and as director of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. In 1980, Spady helped found the Network for Outcome Based Schools and served as its director and published its quarterly publication, *Outcomes* (Spady, 1994).

Spady (1988) believed that "by designing our educational system to achieve clearly defined exit outcomes, we will free ourselves from the traditional rigidity of schools and increase the likelihood that all students will learn" (p. 5). The key beliefs of OBE were based on the following constructs: 1) all students can learn and succeed, 2) successful learning fosters more successful learning, 3) schools control some of the conditions that directly influence student learning, opportunities, and success, and 4) what and whether students learn successfully is more important than exactly when or how they learn (Spady, 1994). He goes on to define OBE as "a comprehensive approach to organizing and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each student" (p. 191). The learning system was based on what a student should do, know, and be like. The interactions of

these outcomes became known as Spady's "Learning Performance Pyramid," illustrated in Figure 1.

The Network for Outcome Based Schools (NO-BS) was developed by Spady to spread the word. In a midwestern state, this network numbered 33 members composed of a state educational agency, four universities, a community college, and intermediate and local school districts. This network sought to develop a model for school improvement that focused upon those academic and personal outcomes students would need for lifelong learning (Desmond, 1996). Leaders of schools seeking to become outcome based were encouraged by the NO-BS (Hoffman, 1996) to develop the following components:

1. Publicly determined and stated learning outcomes for all students.
2. A criterion-referenced assessment system derived from those outcomes.
3. Objective-based core and alternative curricula derived from those outcomes.
4. A systematic process for planning and providing instruction appropriate to each student.

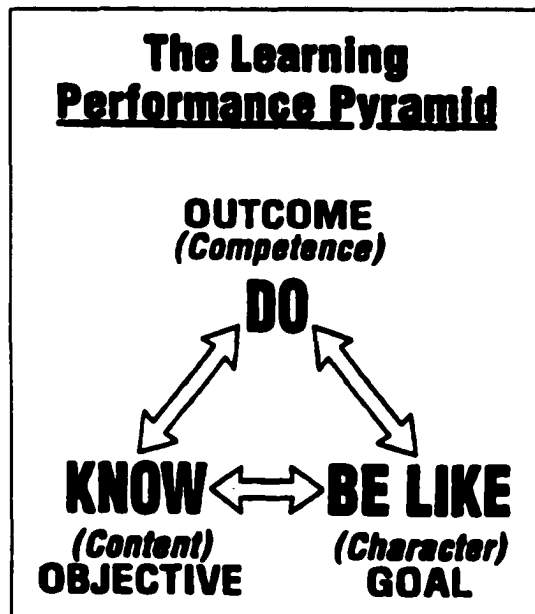


Figure 1. The Learning Performance Pyramid (Spady, 1994, p. 54)

5. A mastery learning system which includes corrective instruction, extension/enrichment, and mastery requirements.
6. A criterion-referenced information management system.
7. An evaluation system which allows students to receive credit at any time.
8. A program evaluation component which guides instructional planning by comparing the learning outcomes of program graduates with the performance demands of post-school roles.

The Township High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, Illinois, became one of the first OBE schools. To help their students succeed, the district set the following student goals: 1) become self-directed learners, 2) employ problem-solving and decision-making skills, 3) attain communication and group-interaction skills, 4) express themselves creatively, 5) utilize skills necessary to adapt to create change, 6) enhance and sustain their self-esteem, and 7) demonstrate concern, tolerance, and respect for others (Fritzpatrick, 1991).

The business community in the 1980s called for many of the OBE-like reforms. Business leaders felt that the educational system was failing to turn out students who could compete on a global level. According to Cuban (1992), "Groups of corporate executives, concerned about the lack of workplace skills of high school graduates, formed business roundtables to lobby local, state, and national policy makers for school improvement" (p. 157). Spady tried to provide the business community with an answer. His OBE approach was "primarily concerned with students' culminating capabilities at graduation time and centers curriculum and assessment design around higher-order exit outcomes" (Spady & Marshall, 1991, p. 69). Spady's contention was that in order for American students to compete on the global level with the Germans and Japanese, they would have to be "equipped to transfer that success to life in a complex, challenging, high-tech future" (p. 72).

During the 1980s, several states attempted to redesign their educational systems to reflect the needs of the 1990s and beyond. Pennsylvania's Outcome Based Education program contained an outcome which attempted to address social skills in the changing business world. *Outcome #6, Appreciating and Understanding Others*, read:

- (i) All students explore and articulate the similarities and differences among various cultures and the history and contributions of diverse cultural groups, including groups to which they belong.
- (ii) All students relate, in writing, speech or other media, the history and nature of prejudice to current issues facing communities, the United States, and other nations.
- (iii) All students develop skills of communicating, negotiating, and cooperating with others to solve interpersonal and intergroup problems and conflicts.
- (iv) All students work effectively with others, demonstrating respect for the dignity, worth, contributions, and equal rights of each person.

(McQuaide & Pliska, 1993/1994, p. 16)

However, Pennsylvania's *Outcome #6* and the concepts it represented would become a primary target for groups critical of OBE.

### **The New Religious Right and Its Criticisms of OBE**

What Americans would object to helping more of their children succeed in school, prepare for the future, and to holding districts accountable for defined student outcomes? The New Religious Right would. They objected to many components of OBE, including those designed by Spady such as the "be like" illustrated in Figure 1, and some only considered OBE by its detractors.

As Spady was developing his program to promote OBE nationally, the Christian Coalition and other conservative groups were preparing to oppose it (Chion-Kenney, 1994). Many



educators were surprised by these objections, as was the case with a noted author in the area of critical thinking methods, Robert J. Marzano:

"How did this all happen?" I asked myself. There I was in front of an auditorium filled with angry community members, trying to explain that my thinking skills program, *Tactics for Thinking*, was not designed to woo their children away from Christianity to a religion called "New Aged." (Marzano, 1993/1994, p. 6)

Manatt (1995) explains, "Outcome Based Education is a goals-setting, curriculum-building process. It has no curriculum content; instead, it is a recipe for a local educational agency or state to plan a new curriculum content for K-12 subject (or integrated subjects). In addition, Rogers and Dana (1995) add this definition of OBE functioning as a philosophical "umbrella" over the operations of strategies, content, curricula, facilities, staffing, and budget. Unfortunately, this OBE umbrella covered anything its opponents wanted it to include, even the area of critical thinking. Robert Simonds (1993/1994) stated:

When you read articles by Janet Jones (1993), Robert Marzano, Skipp Porteous [a former fundamentalist minister turned critic who headed up the Institute for First Amendment Studies, a liberal advocacy group], TheodoreSizer, and John Goodlad, remember that their agenda is atheism, socialism, and an anti-democratic, world globalism. To them, "critical thinking" means teaching children to empty themselves of their own values (transmitted from parents, church, and culture) and accept a set of suggested values (atheist/socialist). (p. 15)

Knowing the position of leaders like Simonds, Marzano might have anticipated the audience's response to his presentation. Critical thinking was contradictory to the Christian Right's desire to return to more traditional forms of education including the teaching of phonics. Schlafly (1994) asks, "When are the schools going to start teaching children the basics?" (p. 27).

William Spady was also bewildered by the reaction to his programs: "I puzzle over the continuing misrepresentation of and assault on genuine OBE" (Spady, 1994, p. 31). Beverly LaHaye, president of the Concerned Women for America (CWA), continued to question Spady's attempts to redefine OBE, even after he included the qualifier "transformational" in 1991 to quiet criticism. Critics such as LaHaye (1994) found Spady's definitions and redefinitions of OBE unsettling: "Because OBE is such a chameleon by nature, taking on different names and meanings in almost every case, I believe OBE causes even greater concern" (p. 28). It appeared that Spady, in trying to make things clearer, only made the opposition more determined to kill all reforms they identified as OBE.

Opposition to OBE and all that it was thought to stand for came from many areas. However, the most vocal and emotional cries of protest sprung from the Christian Right and its feeder organizations such as the CWA. Arnold F. Fege, director of the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), warned, "Terms such as Far Right and Fundamentalist do not adequately reflect the depth of the cultural wars being waged over our schools" (Fege, 1993/1994, p. 23). Jane Boston, director of the Stanford Program on International and Cross Cultural Education, admonished, "Labels belie the complexity of the human characters and the groups which we associate them" (p. 39). A complex political force was at work in educational America in the early 1990s. The actions, reactions, and consequences of this political, religious, and educational force define the Christian Right and its opportunistic focus on single issues.

OBE concepts were under attack, according to Zitterkopf (1994) in his article, "A Fundamentalist's Defense of OBE." This attack came particularly from those individuals on the right side of the political spectrum, the Christian Fundamentalists. According to Hicks (1994), "One of the more distinctive elements in the Republican coalition that emerged in 1980 was the

New Right. It was based primarily upon religious fundamentalism and oriented toward single-issue activism..." (p. 95).

Single-issue politics became a trademark of organizations involved in early 1990s American elections. As pointed out by Marsden (1991), Falwell raised the level of his followers' emotions, describing the Christian Right as "a fundamentalist who is very angry about something" (p. 1). Falwell credited the single issue of school prayer for getting him involved with the Moral Majority (Manatt, 1995). Falwell was first involved in the Moral Majority—disbanded after the televangelist scandals of 1987—and resurfaced later when the movement shifted its focus from national to local politics (Saber, 1993; Conason, 1992).

This local activism was examined by Judis (1994) who viewed the religious right as a fusion of conservative Christianity with political conservatism. Judis traced the modern movement to the late 1970s. An organization of Southern evangelical ministers set out to prevent the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) from removing the tax exemption on the segregated Christian academies. These "white flight" academies were established in response to *Brown v. Board of Education*. The IRS became prominent in the discussion of the Christian Coalition as a tax-exempt "social welfare organization" (Conason, 1992). Judis concluded that issues over school prayer, changing family life, feminism, gay rights, and teenage sexuality united the organization. Although there existed no one clear definition of the Christian Right in the literature, the theme, rhetoric, strategy, and tactics bound this conglomerate of organizations, members, and leaders together. The People for the American Way (PAW), an organization formed to act as a watchdog on the Christian Right, listed the following organizations as a *Who's Who* of the Religious Right: American Family Association, Christian Coalition, Citizens for Excellence in Education/National Association of Christian Educators, Concerned Women for America, Eagle Forum, Family Research Council,

Focus on the Family, Free Congress Foundation, National Right to Life Committee, Operation Rescue National, and Traditional Values Coalition (see Appendix A).

The Christian Right voiced an acute anxiety about the educational role of the government. As far as the Christian Right was concerned, the school is an extension of the government which is meddling in personal and family values (Frahm, 1994). In agreement, LaHaye (1994), president of the CWA, stated, "Teaching values and beliefs should be left to families, for a student's education neither begins nor ends in the classroom" (p. 29).

A variety of ideological tendencies existed within the Christian Right. At the truly extreme end of the political spectrum were the Reconstructionists who advocated a call for "the imposition of an Old Testament style theocracy, complete with capital punishment for offenses including adultery, homosexuality and blasphemy" (Diamond, 1996, p. 48). In the case of Connecticut's OBE debate, Frahm (1994) stated, "In the eyes of many educators, the debate lapsed into the absurd" (p. 158). Ron Brandt (1993/1994), representing the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, summed up educators' reaction to OBE:

Understandably, educators resent irrational attacks on programs they have worked hard to develop, programs representing educational values they believe in. They deplore the unscrupulous political tactics (such as late-night phone calls to board members at their homes, unreasonably burdensome requests for information, and stealth election/election campaigns) used by some groups, and they are offended by distortions of their ideas and actions that sometimes seem intended primarily to erode confidence in public education. (p. 2)

Teachers, administrators, board members, and state educational departments felt attacked by the Christian Right. Altwerger (1998), in her book about whole language, *In Defense of Good Teaching*, summarized the political situation for educators:

We in education have been politically naive to believe that with the right evidence, the definitive study, and the persuasive publication we will convince our opposition and quell the attacks. Clearly, the Right has been much more adept than the whole language community at recognizing and then using literacy as the political tool it is in this country. (p. 176)

Although there were 42 states instituting some form of OBE (Evan & King, 1994, p. 12), the objections had a certain commonality—some of this was due to the dissemination of information from the previously mentioned centralized, national Christian Right organizations. These organizations provided tactical and strategic support for their members on the national, state, and local school district level. A level of technical advancement was demonstrated with the release of an anti-OBE videotape circulated by Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE). Emotional appeal was strategically deployed as in one scene where "the child is taken away as uniformed guards restrain the parent, who struggles to save her daughter from the clutches of the state" (Pliska & McQuaide, 1994, p. 66).

OBE spawned controversies on the state level. Pliska and McQuaide (1994) maintained the opposition to OBE revolved around three major issues in Pennsylvania. First, critics objected to affective learning outcomes because the home was the place to teach their values. Critics, such as CEE, were concerned about the measurement of affective outcomes and the resulting demand for conformity to the global citizen image. Public schools, using B. F. Skinner's behavioral conditioning [it was argued], would brainwash students into accepting these global values. Second, critics in Pennsylvania maintained that the OBE efforts were just a covert attempt by their state to pass a quality assessment plan of both cognitive and affective areas—attacked and discontinued in the 1970s. Third, critics were concerned that all the information collected on their students and passed on from grade to grade would be used to create a database filled with

information that, if accessed by the government, could reveal private information on students and their families.

Schlafly (1994) insisted that the OBE outcomes "concern values, attitudes, opinions, and relationships rather than objective and factual knowledge" (p. 27). In their fundamental beliefs, there was only one right answer, the one that God gave them in the Bible. They expected the educational system to reflect that same belief. "The idea of more than one 'correct' answer has driven reactionaries up the wall" (Diamond, 1996, p. 70).

The Bible is not always used to justify the Christian Right's educational cause. The format of many of the articles written by the fundamentalist leadership appeared like any other educational article and addressed educational concerns. In fact, most articles reviewed supporting the Christian Right, avoided quoting the Bible (Reed, 1993; Simonds, 1993, 1993/1994; LaHaye, 1994; Schlafly, 1994). A few others (Fritz, 1992) contained Biblical scripture to document the Christian Right's footnoting of the ultimate truth.

Many educational reform movements were incorporated by Spady into components of OBE. As a result, the concept of mastery learning became targeted by the Christian Right. Thomas Guskey and Robert Slavin tried to distance themselves, but to no avail. Mastery learning, as defined by Guskey (1994), was "principally an instructional process designed to help teachers enhance their teaching procedures so more students learn excellently" while "outcome based education is principally a curriculum reform model with definite implications for assessing student learning" (p. 37). Slavin tried to counter identification with OBE through an article titled "Outcome Based Education is Not Mastery Learning" and stated, "I hope it is clear that my review of group-based learning had nothing to do with OBE" (Slavin, 1994, p. 14). Despite Slavin's protests and Guskey's distinctions, attacks on mastery learning as part of OBE continued. As the leader of the CWA, LaHaye quoted Slavin as calling "OBE the 'Robin Hood approach to

learning' because it holds high achievers back so the level of low achievers can be raised" (LaHaye, 1994, p. 29). Eagle Forum's president, Phyllis Schlafly (1994), labeled it "the 'dumbing-down' effect" where "OBE deprives all students of incentives to study and work hard because they are allowed to take tests over and over again until they pass.... The faster learners discover they can't go forward any faster than the group. The slower learners realize if they sit and wait, someone will finally give them the answers" (p. 26).

Thus, many parents of high-achieving students argued that less than rigorous outcomes would hurt their child's educational program. LaHaye (1994) commented on the issue of the faster students being used to tutor the slower ones by saying, "OBE proponents call this 'success.' Others, however, see it for what it is: the systematic elimination of excellence" (p. 29).

The Business Roundtables met and agreed on what skills were desirable for future workers. LaHaye attacked the corporate component of OBE. The work of the Business Roundtables was looked on as flawed and biased toward multinational corporations by the Christian Right. Fritz (1994) contended that the concept of cooperative learning to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a fallacy. He asserted that the factor of "Need Some, Force All" was driving federal and state educational departments and some local districts. It was wrong, Fritz contended: "Just because some folks need to work cooperatively doesn't mean we should force it on everyone. After all, we'll still want sculptors, poets, authors, night watchpersons [politically correct term] and other solo workers" (p. 81). Schlafly (1994) agreed schools were headed in the wrong direction using cooperative learning. She stated, "OBE bans all competition and rewards for achievement, such as traditional grades on report cards, honors, and spelling bees" (p. 26).

Another type of competition the Christian Right had in mind was that of a school choice initiative. As Simonds (1993) declared, "Competition will improve rather than threaten the public schools" (p. 18). Falwell was not as diplomatic in his vision of the future of public schools. In his

1979 book, *America Can Be Saved*, he declared, "I hope I live to see the day when, as in the early days of country, we won't have any public schools. The churches will have taken over again and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be" (Manatt, 1995, p. 3).

Strategic political activism had moved from the national to the state and local level.

According to Reed (Saber, 1993), "The future for the pro-family movement lies not in quadrennial millennialistic [four-year elections] runs at the White House. It lies in building an infrastructure and a farm team" (p. 781). The tactics to carry out this strategy were both controversial and effective. High visibility and the backlash in the media were to be avoided. The Christian Right used advertisements on Pat Robertson's Family Channel and on CNN. The "stealth" campaign was born. As executive director of the Christian Coalition, Reed (1993) maintained the term "stealth campaign" was only a shock tactic used by leftist organizations to label legitimate conservative political activities.

Despite this disclaimer, Reed was the one who called for "guerrilla warfare" tactics combined with fighter technology—"flying below radar of media scrutiny" (Saber, 1993, p. 781). Conason (1992) reports "flying below radar" as his favorite motto along with boasting, "The coalition's targets don't know what his 'guerrilla warriors' are doing until it's too late" (p. 552). Reed continued, "Every movement you disguise your position and your truth from the enemy because the minute you stick your head up, you can be shot" (Saber, 1993, p. 782). Reed continued the battlefield rhetoric by boasting, "I do guerrilla warfare. I paint my face and travel at night. You don't know it's over until you're in a body bag. You don't know until election night" (Kaplan, 1994, K10).

School board elections usually have very low voter turnouts. Guy Rogers, the Christian Coalition national field director, stated in an interview with *The Nation*:



Now in low-turnout elections the percentage of those who determine who wins can be as low as 6 or 7 percent! Is this sinking in? We don't have to worry about convincing a majority of Americans to agree with us. Most of them are staying home and watching *Falcon Crest*. They're not involved, they're not voting, so who cares? (Conason, 1992, p. 555)

Christian Right candidates were elected using selective voter registration, limited campaign awareness (contacts made through direct mailings or handed out in church), and avoidance of candidate forums. Saberi stated, "The stealth strategy was first successfully implemented in the San Diego County School Board elections of 1990" (p. 782). And the San Diego elections were not just a local affair. According to Nasman (1993):

Local candidates, who were supported by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and the National Association of Christian Educators/Citizens for Excellence in Education, stayed out of sight while their supporters created false issues and challenged the credibility of all local government agencies. (p. 28)

This election would become a boiler plate or "San Diego Model" for many elections. Kaplan (1994) maintained, "Stealth maneuvers have proved successful in dozens, perhaps hundreds, of school board races in which religious conservative candidates have used videotapes, leaflets, billboards, and other surrogates rather than subject themselves to face-to-face confrontations with opponents and voters" (p. K10). The impact of the elections was far reaching. Judis (1994) summarized the results of the San Diego 1990 election:

The religious right candidates captured sixty of eighty-eight local races and took over the Republican Party's central committee. The next fall twenty-four school board candidates won seats—often without revealing what they stood for...revealed their sectarian priorities—for instance, through demanding that the computer spelling

program "Wizard" be removed from the schools and that a Roald Dahl classic [*Witches*] be banned from library shelves. (p. 24)

Robert L. Simonds, president of the National Association of Christian Educators and Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE), denied that any of the election tactics were not strictly ethical.

CEE parents are doing what any intelligent, well-educated people would do: elect to school boards other parents who are concerned with the above issue.... There's nothing "stealth" or "subversive" about it—the members are just participating in the democratic process: representative government. (Simonds, 1993/1994, p. 15)

Ralph Reed, Jr., the executive director of the Christian Coalition, asserted "the New York experience [the firing of Chancellor Joseph Fernandez and the gaining control of six of New York's 32 school districts] debunked the myth of so-called 'stealth candidates'." Reed maintained, "They ran openly and proudly on the issues—and won stunning upsets" (Reed, 1993, p. 17), but Arthur J. Kropp, president of People for the American Way, disagreed with Mr. Reed's assessment of the New York campaigns. Kropp (1993) contended the Christian Right's candidates used stealth campaigning:

Case in point: At a Christian Coalition seminar in New York, a trainer warned: "You're not morally obliged to say all things to all people.... You don't have to answer every question, and if you do, you're going to get yourself in trouble."

Candidates are coached to campaign feverishly within their own church networks—phone-banding to church directories, leafleting church parking lots, obtaining endorsements from the pulpit. At the same time, they are told to duck mainstream press interviews, speaking invitations, and debates to keep the rest of the community in the dark. (p. 48)

Given this climate of fierce opposition, what would happen to school superintendents who tried to promote OBE? Would the Christian Right respond locally as they had nationally and statewide? O'Neil (1994) stated, "Supporters of OBE find themselves in a precarious position. Many of them believe strongly that an educated graduate is not just someone who has absorbed a set of discrete experiences in the traditional academic domains" (p. 8). Simonds (1993/1994) provided an ominous answer: "Those who will not learn from history (what has really worked in the past as well as today) will learn, too late, that ignorance can often be fatal" (p. 15).

### **Administrative Stress**

Stress has become a significant topic of research in our modern society. In 1936, Hans Selye defined the stress response. He described a three-stage, nonspecific, physiologic response of the body to a stressor which disrupted the body's stable state (Stone, 1996, p. 13-5). However, Selye's description of stressor was very general.

During World War II, studies focused on the performance of Americans under the stress of combat. In their study of Army Air Force crews, Grinker and Spiegel (1945) noted, "Never in the history of the study of human behavior has it been so important to understand the psychological mechanisms of 'normal' individuals in situations of stress" (Salas, Driskell, & Hughes, 1996, p. 5). As the knowledge of stress began to grow, so did a concern of its impact in the workplace.

A lack of consensus on a definition of workplace stress or on the process by which it impacts the health of the worker still exists (Blix & Lee, 1991). Negative stress will be interfaced with the existing legal view of workers' compensation law. Types of occupational stressors may be categorized as those deriving from the nature of a given job, organization, or outside an organization (Stone, 1996, p. 13-9). The intent of this review is to provide the reader with a

body of knowledge needed to measure the impact of stress on the superintendent who is the subject of this case study.

Glass (1992) stated in his study that a majority of superintendents experience a moderate degree of job stress. Definitions of negative occupational stress relate to the inability of the individual worker to cope effectively with various job demands. The result may affect physiological and psychological functioning (Weiman, 1977). Maslach and Jackson (1981) labeled the emotional draining of chronic stress "burnout," a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who are in the helping professions.

In 1976, Christina Maslach explored the concept of "burnout." Maslach (1976) found that burnout correlates with other damaging indexes of human stress, such as alcoholism, mental illness, marital conflict, and suicide. Maslach reported that when discussing the damaging indexes of human stress, "the suicide rate of police officers, for example, is 6½ times higher than that of people in non-law enforcement occupations" (p. 6). Janik and Kravitz (1994) stated that depression is the most common cause of suicide.

In exploring the negative effects of stress, Gmelch and Chan (1995) concluded that although most educational administrators did report moderate stress, 26.6% reported "serious" stress from task-based duties. Duties which cause stress are referred to as job stressors in the area of industrial organizational psychology. A job stressor is a condition or situation at work which requires an adaptive response while a job strain is a potential aversive reaction (Spector, 1996). Konnert and Augenstein (1990) list the following nine stressors that are part of the superintendency for most individuals: frustration at one's work, frustration in one's private life, lack of motivation, personality conflicts, role conflicts, time pressures, career frustration, lack of closure, continued uncertainty and strangeness, fatigue, physical violence or threat of, and threat

of or actual physical injury. Depression, according to the literature review, is a common byproduct of stress.

Leaders in the public sector face unique stressors. Brubaker and Shelton (1995) warn: Without criticism of a leader's decisions and decision-making operations, you have passivity, and passivity leads to a stagnant culture. On the other hand, mean-spirited critics create a culture of incivility that erodes people's trust in the leaders and chips away at the power of the offices public officials hold. (p. 17)

Sometimes, officials resign in a flight response to avoid the stress of a situation. In her article on stress, Ramsey (1996) summarized how professional difficulties often leave administrators with feelings of anger, shame, failure, and sadness. In the case studied by Ramsey, the superintendent left the school district due to the "change in the makeup and mission of school board members" (p. 26). Leaving a position one long dreamed of attaining can be an emotionally wrenching experience.

Roseanne Fogarty (1997) reflected on the stress placed on public officials concerning the suicide of Colleen Fennell, a superintendent in New York State. The superintendent had endured more than a year of insults and scorn from a divided school board before taking her own life. According to Fogarty, an assistant professor of Educational Administration, the suicide was cause for alarm for the educational leadership:

Her tragic death [Colleen Fennell] shook New York's education community, and it brought renewed attention to an issue already troubling many: the state of public civility and public service. The tragedy raised anxious questions among the aspiring administrators whom I teach about how to handle such traumas. These were questions for which I had no satisfactory answers. (p. 42)

### **Stress in the superintendency**

Superintendents, although generally thought of as management, are still employees in the American workplace. Ambiguity has been due to the personal nature of stress. Perceptions of stress vary greatly among individuals. One school administrator may resign from a superintendency, dejected and crestfallen from public attacks, while another may only grow stronger and work harder. Gmelch (1996) has studied over 5,000 administrators and their reactions and consequences of stress. He stated, "A moderate amount of stress helps them reach peak performance, but when stress reaches excessive proportions, their performance significantly declines, resulting in burnout" (p. 38). In terms of the negative aspects of stress, most definitions of occupational stress have related to the inability of the individual worker to cope effectively with various job demands.

Weiman (1977), in his study of 1,540 administrative employees, identified four factors: 1) too much or too little to do; 2) extreme ambiguity or rigidity in relation to one's tasks; 3) too much or too little role conflict; and 4) too much or too little responsibility. These factors were positively correlated with heavy smoking, hypertriglyceridemia, hypertension, arteriosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia, obesity, and peptic ulcer. Sharp and Walter's (1995) survey of 224 Illinois superintendents found 57.3% said the job affected their physical health (p. 7).

Paul and Gomez (1995) found in a study of 278 Wisconsin superintendents that 81.7% of respondents reported stresses of their position left little time for their own marriage or the family. Helen Sharp (1998), the spouse of a former superintendent, commented on the harmful impact of the job stressors on her marriage: "A spouse absorbs the job's pressures just as school leaders do" (p. 30). Richardson (1998), in a study of 149 Connecticut superintendents, found "venting with their spouses" a common stress-coping strategy (p. 14). The Nebraska Council for School Administrators conducted a survey of spouses of school administrators with a total of 575 spouses

(Bruckner, 1998). The highest number of respondents (27 percent) were married to superintendents, next elementary school principals (21 percent), and high school principals (17 percent).

The study found that spousal concern fell into the following categories: after-hours demands, dual personalities, stress on the job, child-rearing duties, pangs of loneliness, changes over time, and effects on children. Of the categories, spouses were most concerned about the effects of stress:

They expressed deep concerns about growing job demands, controversial school board decisions, increasingly serious behavioral problems with students and the expectations that public school leaders should volunteer their time in multiple community projects and organizations. Wives were worried that their husbands couldn't sleep at night, that they kept thinking about meetings when they came home and that the mental strain would lead to physical strain. One husband of a superintendent wrote: "She has little or no time to herself for relaxation." (p. 25)

The pro-active stance of mitigating the harmful effects of stress was advocated in the literature. Based on extensive research, Gmelch (1996) advocated that superintendents control rather than avoid stress. The first step was to understand the demands of the superintendency or "stress traps." Gmelch compared the stress traps existing in 1976 and those found in 1993. The top three for both years were: 1) complying with rules and policies, 2) gaining public approval for financial support, and 3) being involved in collective bargaining (p. 36).

Gmelch suggested positive responses to the perceived stress could be made by the individual. In the following definition of stress, Gmelch revealed the key component of individual role and his/her perception of the stressors:

The anticipation (which could be real or imaginary) of your inability (the degree to which you feel prepared to perform the role of superintendent) to respond adequately to a perceived demand (stress traps, whether they exist or not), accompanied by your anticipation (either real or imaginary) of negative consequences for an adequate response. (p. 35)

The action plan included the following activities: plan some personal time each day; compartmentalize work and non-work activities; do one task at a time; strive to enrich yourself physically, socially, mentally, and emotionally; have a retreat away from the office; and live by your calendar, not your watch. Gmelch encouraged the stressed superintendent to find the coping response which best matched the individual's situation and needs.

Gmelch (1993) portrayed the effects of stress on a U-shaped curve illustrated in Figure 2. The degree of stress ranges from low to high on the horizontal axis, and the degree of effective performance ranges from low to high on the vertical axis. Gmelch illustrates that a certain amount of stress can produce positive stimulation.

Gmelch's curve illustrated the two extreme effects of stress on the individual. In an article entitled "The Overstated Case of Administrator Stress," Milstein (1992) stated, "Rather than being highly stressed, educators experiencing plateauing lose their sense of professional growth and challenge. This is not burnout. It is rustout" (p. 13). In keeping with Milstein's stance, more of the "stress cases" should be placed on the left tail (see Figure 2).

Much of the research on the topic of administrative stress started in 1974 by Freudenberger (Walkey & Green, 1992), and it was Freudenberger who first defined burnout as a "state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward" (Gold, 1985, p. 210). Christina Maslach made augmentations to the definition of burnout. In examining the effect of high stress jobs in the



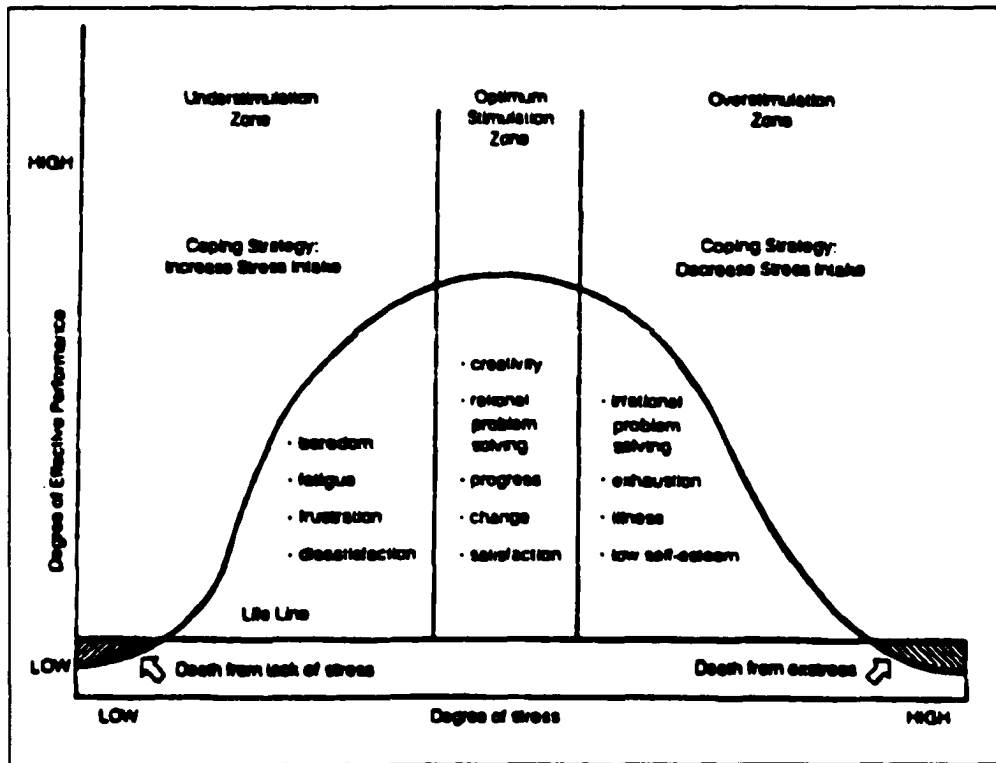


Figure 2. Stress and performance curve (Gmelch & Chan, 1994, p. 69)

profession of health and social workers, Maslach (1976) described burnout as "losing all concern, all emotional feeling, for the people one works with" (p. 16).

Although "the term 'burnout' has been overused and, in a sense, diluted in today's vernacular" (Hosch, 1996, p. 6), it remains a valuable research construct. Maslach (1978) provided an enlightened response in an attempt to understand what is happening to the stressed professional:

Although this dispositional analysis attributing the fault to "bad" persons is fairly widely held, a contrary theme emerging from our research is that the source of the problem lies more in the situation than in the people and that the problem is best understood and modified in terms of the social and situational sources of the job-

related stresses. Burnout is prevalent, and the range of seemingly disparate professionals who are affected by it, suggest that we should be looking at the "bad" situations in which many good people function rather than trying to uncover the "bad" people who are staffing institutions. (p. 58)

Many studies have been conducted to establish burnout-related constructs. Golembiewski, Boudreau, Munzenrider, and Luo (1996) attempted to review the problem of burnout on a global basis in their book entitled, *Global Burnout: A Worldwide Pandemic Explored by the Phase Model*. Their unique study (pp. 19–20) summarizes the dominant associations with burnout across cultures.

Stress and burnout are a concern in American educational culture as reiterated by Larry Cuban. He states, "Stress is as natural to the superintendency as to any executive's job" (Goldstein, 1992, p. 12). Cuban pointed out that the current pressures to improve schools and increase their public accountability have "been one of this century's longest and most sustained periods of national attention. And it's been negative. The superintendent can't win. It is not politically correct to defend the schools" (p. 14).

No one can envision a stress-free superintendency. Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, and Sybouts (1996) described the time and energy invested by a typical superintendent:

The life of a superintendent requires him or her to meet with a wide array of constituents and discuss a variety of conditions, problems, and opportunities. For the most part, the day involves meetings, schedules, speeches, visitations, discussions with board members, and negotiations. The day begins early and ends late.

Superintendents average 12-hour days and 60- to 70-hour weeks. (p. 64)

Gmelch and Swent (1984) studied 1,156 respondents from the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators. The results indicated that the stressors perceived by administrators to be

the most stressful were related to management of activities and their relationship to time (p. 203). There are other very stressful situations for school administrators including: "Being reprimanded, having too little time, and being told about the possibility of being fired are all examples of job stress" (Spector, 1996, p. 283).

Glass (1992), in his American Association of School Administrators (AASA) national study of 1,710 superintendents, revealed a general view that the superintendency was a moderately (41.7%) to considerably stressful (7.8%) occupation. The study conducted by Glass represented a large sample of America's educational leadership. According to Richard Miller, at that time executive director of AASA, "This study is based on the opinions of about 12 percent of the nation's superintendents. More than half of the nation's school children are served by the survey sample group" (p. vii).

Walter Gmelch and his colleagues have conducted many studies to determine the effects of occupational stress on the health and performance of managers. Gmelch stated the total number is over 5,000 (Gmelch, 1996). In the spring of 1991, 655 Washington State administrators completed questionnaires. The components from this substantial study have been reported in numerous sources (Gmelch, 1991; Gmelch & Chan, 1992; Torelli & Gmelch, 1992; Gmelch & Gates, 1997). Concerning this latest study of the collected data, the authors stated, "The analysis of the study attempts to determine the most relevant personal, professional, and organizational variables that have been uncovered through previous research as sources of administrator stress and burnout" (Gmelch & Gates, 1996, p. 147).

To gather data, Gmelch and others employed the Administrator Work Inventory (AWI) and a general questionnaire to gather data. The AWI included the Administrator Stress Index, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the Administrative Role Questionnaire, the Sayles Type A

Personality, the Support Climate Instrument, and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. Gmelch and Gates (1997) reported the following:

Clearly emotional exhaustion stands as the central construct of administrator burnout with seven variables explaining the 47 percent of the variance. On the downside, the four variables that accentuate emotional exhaustion reflect the intensity of administration: 1) the task-based stress characterized by interruptions, participating in activities outside school hours, too heavy a workload, meetings, and writing reports, memos, and other communications; 2) the conflict-medicating stress riddled with trying to resolve differences between students, parents, teachers, and superiors; 3) the competitive nature of Type A behavior—trying to finish things up, taking work more seriously than others, and a hard-driving work ethic; and 4) the overall level of stress administrators feel.

McGrath (1976) developed a "stress event cycle" to provide a theoretical framework for the study of stress and coping. His cycle contained four components:

- A situation: an event(s) or condition that occurs or is anticipated in the environment of some focal system (a focal system is an individual, group, organization, or other human system to which a stress researcher chooses to attend).
- The perceived situation: the focal system's interpretation of those events.
- The response selection: the system's choice of coping responses to those events.
- The coping behavior: those responses, the execution of which have consequences both for the focal system and for the external context within which all of this is taking place. (Shupe & McGrath, 1998, p. 86)

Building on McGrath's body of work, Gmelch (1991) developed a conceptual model for understanding administrative stress. His model incorporated the "stress event cycle," but added a more linear sequence. The Managerial Stress Cycle (see Figure 3) contains four stages: 1) Demands or Stressors; 2) Perceptions and Interpretations of Stressors; 3) Response to Perceived Stressor; and (4) Consequences of Responses. Gmelch and Chan (1995) commented on their design: "The stages are set in sequential order and reflect direct causal effect such that the variables in the first stage are hypothesized to be a direct causal effect of the variables in the second state, and so forth" (p. 276).

Stage One illustrated in Figure 3 is a set of demands or stressors placed on the individual.

This theoretical framework includes the following dimensions:

- 1) Role-based stress, perceived from administrator's role-set interactions and beliefs or attitudes about his or her role in the schools.

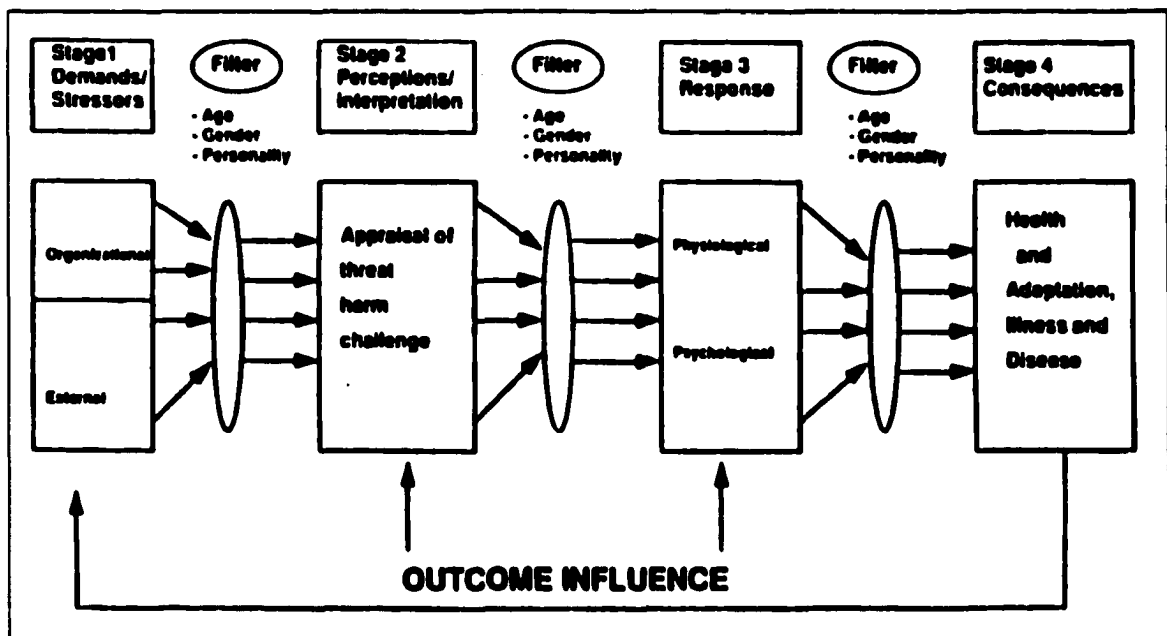


Figure 3. Managerial Stress Cycle (Gmelch, 1991, p. 34)

- 2) **Task-based stress**, arising from the performance of day-to-day administrative activities, from telephone and staff interruptions, meetings, writing memos, and reports, to participating in school activities outside of the normal working hours.
- 3) **Boundary-spanning stress**, emanating from external conditions, such as negotiations and gaining public support for school budgets.
- 4) **Conflict-mediating stress**, arising from the administrator handling conflicts within the school such as trying to resolve differences between and among personnel, resolving parent and school conflicts, and handling student discipline. (Gmelch & Gates, 1997, p. 147)

Gmelch (1991) explained that between each stage of the stress cycle are filters. These filters are "composed of two moderating influences, the individual's personality or predisposition and demographic considerations such as cultural heritage and personal history" (p. 16). These filters affect the influence of and interaction between each of the four stages.

**Stage Two, Perceptions and Interpretations of Stressors**, depends on the perception or interpretation of the stressors by the individual. In this stage, if the person cannot respond to the demand(s), the stress will increase. This may sometimes be the case with Type A personalities.

Studies have identified Type A personalities as hard driving and competitive with a strong achievement orientation; these Type A personalities have also been found most likely to experience stress and ill health (Peterson, 1999, p. 31). Quick, Quick, Nelson, and Hurrell (1997) provided sample items from the Jenkins Activity Survey, which is used to assess Type A behavior. The following four items illustrate Type A behaviors: 1) frequently hurries speaker to the point; 2) tends to get irritated easily; 3) frequently brings work home at night; and 4) gives much more effort than the average worker (p. 143). The harmful effects of a Type A personality,

including the beginning of physical ailments, as with the other consequences of stress can be highly dependent on the individual variables.

Stage Three, Response to Perceived Stressor, according to Torelli and Gmelch (1992), presents choices to the individual. The person can perceive the stressor to be harmful, threatening, or demanding. Stress-coping strategies can counteract the stressor in a positive manner and the individual does not progress to Stage Four, but returns to a lower stage of stress. However, if the individual is unable to cope with the stressors, then that person moves into the Fourth Stage, Consequences of Responses.

Stage Four of the cycle contains a return to health if the negative consequences of stress can be overcome by the individual; then the individual loops back to lower stages of the model. However, if the coping behaviors fail, the individual experiences the profound consequence of stress, burnout. To be able to assess the amount of burnout experienced, Gmelch and others have utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) in their studies. Maslach and Jackson (1981) developed the MBI to measure perceived burnout for the three most significant hallmarks of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment.

According to Gmelch and Gates (1996), emotional exhaustion distinguishes behaviors associated with low levels of energy and the feeling of being drained. Maslach (1998) states that exhaustion is the most widely reported and analyzed effect of stress: "Exhaustion is the central quality of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome" (p. 77).

Depersonalization is the scope of burnout which is linked to feelings of lost identity and lost meaningfulness. Maslach states, "Distancing is such an immediate reaction to exhaustion that a strong relationship from exhaustion to depersonalization or cynicism is found consistently in burnout research, across a wide range of organizational and occupational settings" (p. 78).

Maslach adds, "A work situation with chronic, overwhelming demands that contribute to exhaustion or cynicism is likely to erode one's sense of accomplishment or effectiveness" (p. 78). Low personal accomplishment is that dimension of burnout where individuals feel disappointed with their accomplishment and/or believe that their actions no longer make a difference.

### **Job Stress and Workers' Compensation**

The multiple volume *Workers' Compensation Law* is the definitive resource in workers' compensation law. Larson (1998) discussed the recent upsurge of stress claims:

It is axiomatic that during the past half-century there has been a broad transformation within the American workplace from a traditional emphasis upon manufacturing and agriculture to a new emphasis upon the exchange of information. And while the workplace can still be a risky site in which to spend one's time, more and more these days American workers are not so much concerned with severed limbs, herniated discs, and byssinosis [inhaling fibers-mill fever] injuries and diseases of the manufacturing environment as they are with the mounting levels of employment—related stress—perceived and actual. (v. 7, p. 980).

In workers' compensation literature, burnout describes the presence of serious mental and physical damage in the individual. Stone (1996), in his work on occupational injuries and illnesses, states:

Clinical manifestations include nonspecific symptoms, such as memory disturbance, difficulty making decisions, anxiety, boredom, irritability, depression and hopelessness, and behavioral changes, such as substance abuse, sleep disorders and disturbed relationships. Specific stress-related mental disorders include post-traumatic stress disorder, mass psychogenic illness and burnout. (p. 13-1)



The purpose of workers' compensation law was to provide assistance to employees or their dependents for compensation for injuries or death attributable to their employment. The three broad types of compensation under the law are mental and related expenses, disability benefits, and death benefits (Hood, Hardy, & Lewis, 1999, p. 92). The need for compensation legislation grew out of the destructive loss of life, limb, and health brought on by the industrial revolution. Beyond the direct physical injury, workers' compensation has provided benefits for mental injuries suffered because of employment. Since 1948, every state has established some form of workers' compensation program (Lowenberg & Conrad, 1998, p. 418). Workers' compensation law provides an established measure for the consequences of work-related negative stress on the mental and physical well-being of an individual superintendent.

The first of three categories is mental problems caused by physical injuries (e.g., the loss of a limb and then depression). This is known as a "mental/physical" injury. There has been relatively little resistance to compensating this type of mental/physical injury once the relationship between the two is established (Elisburg, 1995).

The second category is physical injury caused by mental stress (e.g., a shock at work causes heart problems). This is recognized as a "physical/mental" injury. There has also been acceptance of this classification once the injury is shown as work related (Murphy et al., 1995).

The third category is mental injury caused by mental problems including stress related illness (e.g., post-traumatic distress disorder or major depression). This is termed a "mental/mental" injury, which is a mental injury without an accompanying physical injury. In this post-industrial world, this injury has become far more commonplace. "Spokespersons for the insurance industry argue that claims for mental injury rose sharply during the 1980s and now account for about 15 percent of all occupational disease claims nationwide" (Levenstein & Wooding, 1997, p. 185). Several states, according to Larson (1998), have addressed the issue of whether stress-

related emotional disability can be compensated as an occupational disease. Oregon and Montana "hold flatly that emotional disability from work stress is an occupation disease," while two states, "Texas and New Mexico, have rejected it" (p. 7-724).

Larson (1998) writes that states that have addressed the issue of stress-injury cases fall into four groups when determining stress-injury coverage:

- Group One: Mental stimulus producing mental injury is compensable even if gradual, and even if the stress is not unusual by comparison with that of ordinary life or employment.
- Group Two: "Mental/mental" cases are compensable even if gradual, but only if the stress is unusual.
- Group Three: "Mental/mental" cases are compensable, but only if the stimulus is sudden.
- Group Four: "Mental/mental" cases are never compensable, whether gradual or sudden; there must be some physical component to the injury.

Group Two involves the type of cases that most people think of when they hear the word "stress." According to Larson (1998), 12 states insist that the stress be unusual [more stressful than that experienced by other people doing the same type of work]. In reviewing cases, workers' compensation law judgments conclude that evidence is "substantial" if a reasonable mind would accept it as adequate to reach a conclusion that "unusual stress" existed. In a mental/mental case, Wyoming and Wisconsin's standards are of the most utility in determining if the stress constitutes an abnormal working environment. Their construct maintains that if after proving medical causation an employee establishes that the mental injury was caused by workplace stress of greater magnitude than the day-to-day mental stresses experienced by other workers employed in the same or similar jobs, benefits should be awarded (*Dunlavey v. Economy Fire and Causality*

*Co.*, 1995). Included in this construct is the ruling from Illinois which stated, "The stress must also be objectively present and not just perceived by the claimant" (Larson, 1998, p. 7-934). This measure of objectively present stress provides a more rigorous standard augmenting the dimension of the perceived stress discussed in Figure 3.

The stress-standard establishes a practical guide to the researcher in measuring stress in a historical situation. The three major components of this stress-standard are the following: 1) the stress must be objectively observable; 2) the stress must be unusual in magnitude; and 3) the mental stress must be extraordinary compared to the everyday pressures experienced by another person in the same position. The stress-standard can thus be used to structure an analysis of qualitative case study data relating to stress and the superintendency.

Given documented demands of the superintendency, coupled with the extraordinary forces operating around the OBE issue in the early 1990s and known effects of stress on superintendents, there easily may be the case when a superintendent completes the Fourth Stage of Gmelch's Managerial Stress Cycle and substantial burnout occurs.

## **CHAPTER III. METHODS AND DESIGN**

### **Statement of the Problem**

As discussed in Chapter I, the problem of this investigation is to examine the confluence of forces, events, and stresses that acted on one superintendent at a certain time and in a certain school district with dramatic results.

### **Research Questions**

Methods and design of this study were formulated to explain the mysteries emerging from this case. The following research questions proposed in Chapter I were formulated to resolve the fundamental enigmas of this case:

1. What was the role of pro- and anti-Outcome Based Education (OBE) forces during the early 1990s present on the national, state, and in the selected community level?
2. What kind of negative stress was produced by the combination of pro- and anti-OBE forces on this case study's superintendent trying to bring about change?
3. What would be the consequences of negative stress on the mental and physical well-being of this case study's superintendent?
4. Does the selected superintendent's responses to negative stress fit the responses predicted by Gmelch's administrative stress model?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives serve to focus on the activities of this study and direct the development of the selected methods and design. Thus, it proves useful in this section to review the objectives.

The following activities were accomplished in this study:

1. Developed a chronological narrative and a timeline of events in this case.
2. Developed a matrix of the selected superintendents' responses to stress (gathered from depositions) to increase the understanding of the dynamics of administrative negative stress.
3. Compared and contrasted the case superintendent's responses to the responses predicted in the stages of Gmelch's administrative stress model.
4. Compared and contrasted the consequences of a superintendent's reaction to negative stress by developing and applying a measure based on workers' compensation law of a number of states.

### **Research Approach**

Chapters I and II provided a strong rationale, sustained or supported by the literature, for the use of a qualitative research design to answer the proposed research questions. Gay (1996) states, "Simplistically put, qualitative research is the collection and analysis of extensive narrative data in order to gain insights into a situation of interest not possible using other types of research" (p. 240). Qualitative research adds potency to studies that are "exploratory or descriptive and that stresses the importance of context, setting, and subjects' frame of reference" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 46). In agreement, Maxwell (1996) lists the strengths of qualitative research as "understanding the meaning for participants in the study of the events, situation and actions they are involved with and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences" (p. 17). The understanding of these meanings is crucial for this study.

## **Research strategies**

A qualitative case study methodology was implemented in this investigation. Yin (1994) states, "The case study has a distinct advantage "when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked regarding a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control" (p. 9). Similarly, Stake (1995) recommends an intrinsic case study methodology when the researcher has "a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we get insight into the question by studying a particular case" (p. 3). The interest in using an intrinsic case study is to learn more about a general problem; in this investigation, the problem of administrative stress.

Case studies are also special because of their focus on a bounded system under natural conditions (Stake, 1988, 1995; Yin, 1994). As part of a case study strategy, Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest that the researcher place boundaries around a study by identifying the area of interest and the time period studied. Boundaries of this study (including time and location) are outlined in the delimitations section of Chapter I.

Finally, Yin (1994) promotes the use of the case study method when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context [real-life] are not clearly evident" (p. 13). This qualitative case study unveils the complexity of the selected setting in what Stake (1988) refers to as the "drama of the commonplace" (p. 260). For these reasons, a case study design was implemented by the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions.

## **Research Design**

Yin (1994) defines a research plan as a logical sequence that connects the research data to the research questions, and then to answers. Yin states, "A research design is *an action plan for getting from here to there*, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be

answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions" (p. 19). In order to achieve this objective outlined by Yin, the following seven design topics operating in this study are addressed: 1) site selection, 2) researcher's role, 3) data collection techniques, 4) data management, 5) data analysis, 6) verification, and 7) report of findings.

### **Site selection**

Marshall and Rossman (1989), in discussing the components of an ideal site, state that it is one where "entry is possible and there is a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, people, programs, interactions, and structures that may be part of research questions will be present" (p. 54). In the present investigation a naturalistic research setting provides a unique site where the consequences of a clash between a superintendent and OBE opponents can be studied. Because this study is involved with events in the historical past, there is no tangible site in the strict ethnographic sense. Though historical, this site can be effectively explored by this researcher through public records, newspaper articles, participants, and court documents.

Marshall and Rossman's suggested "rich mix" is well represented, for instance, in existing legal documents with two dozen depositions gathered from a multiplicity of informants. This cross-section exists since the topic of this study has been the object of litigation and provides the researcher with a large body of evidence accumulated through the judicial process. To assure accurate access to a complete set of district court documents, this researcher secured an *Order to Withdraw Records* (see Appendix B) to photocopy court records. This order allowed the researcher to withdraw from the clerk's office the court transcripts and exhibits. This action allowed accurate copying of complete sets of complex records which enhanced trustworthiness as well.

**Role of the researcher**

In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the study. Because other components of the study are affected by the role of the researcher, it is important for the reader to understand the possible biases, values, and judgments of the researcher in the discussion of the research design.

The researcher's experiences involve over 20 years in education as a teacher, administrator, and post-secondary instructor. This experience includes service as an assistant principal, K-12 principal, and special education director. The experience of being a member of the professional educational community allows for the establishment of positive research relationships with subjects and other contacts who also belong to the educational subculture. As a member of this community, this researcher added to the understanding of educational language, procedures, and hidden meanings.

The researcher's years of service as a building administrator occurred during the reform period (1987-1992) in Iowa. The set of experiences of a K-12 principal had the added stressor as the school district and community went through a politically difficult time revolving around whole-grade sharing in the wake of state-encouraged district consolidations. Debates raged, families were politically split, community meetings were held, heated board elections were conducted, open enrollments were carried out, and physical threats were made. Stressful situations existing at this school mirrored many of those that existed at the selected research site for this case study. Since that time, the researcher has completed graduate studies in educational leadership and the superintendency.

Since a component of this inquiry is impacted by fundamentalist Christian beliefs, the researcher chooses to inform the readers that he is a member of a mainline Christian church. This researcher is aware that his beliefs do not conform to those held by many Christian



fundamentalists and evangelicals. This researcher minimized observer bias by being cognizant of these religious differences.

The researcher received approval of the Human Subjects Release from the Iowa State University Graduate College (see Appendix C). Ethical considerations were governed by the ethics and procedures agreed to in this release, including informed consent procedures (see Appendix D). To provide emotional support for participating subjects who might possibly experience emotional discomfort, names, telephone numbers, and addresses of help professionals and organizations were provided as part of the consent form process. Disruption to subjects' lives was minimized by the voluntary nature and anonymizing [term coined by Robert Stake, 1995] design of this inquiry. Yin (1994) prefers the option of using disclosing real identities; however, he states, "The most common rationale is that, when the case study has been on a controversial topic, anonymity serves to protect the real case and its real participants" (p. 143). Also, because of the wealth of public legal documents from two court cases, the researcher avoided interviewing family members without compromising the integrity of this study.

### **Data collection techniques**

A case study involves a choice of a case rather than others and in making sampling decisions within the case (Maxwell, 1996). Sampling in this discussion is considered purposeful, not random. Data collection is designed to provide methods to answer this study's research questions and to triangulate the different methods. The key methods of data collection used in this study were interviewing (see Appendix E for a menu of questions) and document collection. The documents collected in this study have special vigor because they contain testimony, and depositions are taken under oath subject to cross-questioning by lawyers and were recorded by a certified shorthand reporter. Information gleaned from a dozen interviews in this study were used

to broaden the researcher's understanding of existing data found in the court documents and to assist in triangulation.

To access information employing interviews, Thomas (1993) proposes a strategy to "identify the types of informants who are most likely to possess an 'insider's knowledge' of the research domain" (p. 37). This researcher referred to them as key informants. Court documents were instrumental in locating key informants. Names of main actors were compiled and their roles were identified by key informants as part of the personal interviews. Dates and events used to construct a timeline were also defined and verified in the interviewing process. To ensure trustworthiness, names of additional informants and the existence of other documents were generated through a snowballing strategy at the end of interviews.

The discovery of documents is essential in answering the research questions. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) maintain "as a data source, documents provide you with historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that is unavailable from other sources" (p. 52). Some key informants were unwilling to participate because of this study's emotional aspects and the torments of legal inquiries.

The discovery of documents related to this case of administrative stress was essential in answering the research questions. Court documents were used to provide data to fill the gaps created by nonparticipation. Court documents were also utilized to generate more in-depth interview questions for study participants leading to what Geertz (1973) described as thick descriptions.

The researcher located selected legal sources at state commissioners' offices, county court houses, and state supreme court offices. Other forms of legal information were collected from university libraries, community libraries, district court houses, state offices, state capitol law

library, and Internet sites. A total of 50 documents consisting of over a total of two thousand pages were accessed and scrutinized.

Legal case records were originally required read at their storage locations. Very often, these records had to be examined by the researcher in the confines of narrow, busy court house corridors. A procedure must be followed to obtain the legal records for viewing. After viewing, the researcher determined what key information would be advantageous to photocopy.

*Application for Record Copies* (see Appendix F) was filed by this researcher to request copies of records from various jurisdictions.

### **Data management**

Effective data management builds a foundation for sound data analysis. Marshall and Rossman (1989) describe data analysis as "the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data" (p. 112). Proper data management also increases reliability or trustworthiness by making it possible to maintain a chain of evidence (Yin, 1994). Due to the anonymizing design of this study, this aspect of research design is crucial. The researcher committed to maintain an audit trail for the study, available only on a "need-to-know" basis to the researcher's committee members. This information is not available to the general readership in accordance with the Iowa State University's Human Subjects Release. However, a list of documents collected with individual identifiers removed was compiled (see Appendix G) for the readers.

After the collection of data, they were coded and filed. Backup photocopies were made of key documents. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommend that "each data scrap receive both a code name and number" (p. 133). Coding colors selected directly related to the appropriate research questions. Matching colored highlighters were employed to code sections within copies of

documents. As an example, pink was used to mark dates and other time references, and green was used to mark major events. These coded data were then used to construct a timeline with major events placed on it. This method was extremely helpful in reconstructing dates and events by using various testimonies, depositions, and personal interviews. This coding was later refined by letter and number coding marking the informant and document. This process was useful since, as the researcher discovered, spelling of names was not consistent and times were not always precisely recalled by the informants.

Audiotapes were transcribed using a *Sanyo Transcribing System*, then labeled and stored. Notes from interviews and the transcripts were placed on *Microsoft Word 6.01*, a processing program. The researcher made continuous backup copies of data which were kept at various locations. Artifacts and other materials were collected, photocopied, color coded, and placed in file folders. Original materials were returned to contributors on request.

### **Data analysis strategies**

Data management entwines with data analysis strategies. Much of the coding evolves into data reduction, which led to refined interpretations. Maxwell (1996) describes data analysis as what the researcher does to make sense of the data collected. This study used an organizational technique suggested by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) "to separate narration and analysis" (p. 164). This study was divided the same way.

### **Description**

The researcher developed a chronological narrative and a timeline of events in this case study. This use of a chronological narrative is supported by other authors. Yin (1994) states: "The analysis of chronological events is a frequent technique in case studies...and permits the

investigator to determine causal events over time" (p. 117). Wolcott (1994) also promotes the use of chronologies. He states, "Relating events in ordinal or chronological sequence offers an efficient alternative to the sometimes lengthy bridges written..." (p. 18). The created narrative and timeline as a presentation of evidence to serve as a structure was used in the interpretation phase. This structure ensured valid descriptions by assuring completeness of the displayed data.

### **Interpretation**

Peshkin (1993) lists interpretive outcomes as characteristics of good research. The research should "explain or create generalizations, develop new concepts, elaborate existing concepts, provide insights, clarify complexity, and develop theory" (p. 25). To comply with Peshkin's expectations of what good research is, this researcher developed a matrix of superintendents' responses to stress (gathered from depositions). This matrix summarized evidence in categories and allowed comparisons to increase the understanding of the dynamics of administrative negative stress.

Gmelch (1991) developed a theoretical model to explain the phenomenon of managerial stress and work relationships. This model was utilized to compare and contrast the case superintendent's responses to the responses predicted in the stages of Gmelch's administrative stress model (see Figure 3).

As part of the analysis of data, this case study incorporated the use of workers' compensation law and rulings in its design of a practical standard to guide the researcher in measuring stress present in this historical situation. This construct was used to compare and contrast the consequences of a superintendent's reaction to negative stress by developing a stress-standard and applying a measure based on workers' compensation law. A table was assembled to display the comparisons.

## **Verification**

Miles and Huberman (1994) define verification as "checking for the most common or most insidious biases that can steal into the process of drawing conclusions" (p. 438). The difficulty of this task is compounded, as evidenced in reviewing the literature, that there exists, as Creswell (1994) states, "Qualitative researchers have no single stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability in qualitative studies" (p. 157). It is the purpose of this section to illustrate how this study developed sound rationale that addressed the concepts of internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

## **Internal validity**

Internal validity is mainly concerned with the accuracy of the information and if it matches reality. The researcher employed four procedures to increase internal validity: 1) triangulation, 2) rival explanations, 3) audit trail, and 4) member checking.

## **Triangulation**

Triangulation was the main focus to improve the trustworthiness of this study. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), "Triangulation is the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point" (p. 146). Yin (1994) refers to triangulation in case studies as "using multiple sources of evidence" (p. 91). To accomplish this, legal documents, newspaper reports, and interviews were used by the researcher to provide triangulation of data. Validity of depositions and testimonies had been rigorously tested through the adversarial judicial system. These documents were additionally subjected to the before mentioned triangulation through the use of other depositions, testimonies, documents, and interviews by the researcher.

Triangulation is needed to clarify legal procedures and to ensure the accuracy of legal interpretations. In this process of consulting an expert, an attorney and Ph.D. in educational administration, Dr. Patrick Payton, was used as a critical reader. Dr. Walter Gmelch was consulted in regard to the fit of his administrative stress model (see Figure 3) and in performing as a critical reader. Experts from other professional and specialized backgrounds were consulted to examine the sound logic of the researcher's interpretations and provide feedback. These readers are credited in the acknowledgment section of this study.

### **Rival explanations**

Ultimately, the narrative discussed the validity of rival explanations crucial in answering the study's posed research questions. "Case researchers enter the scene expecting, even knowing, that certain events, problems, relationships will be important yet discover that some actually are of little consequence" (Stake, 1994, p. 240). According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), "The researcher must search for other, plausible explanations for these data and the linkages among them" (p. 119). According to Yin (1993), using rival theories can be used as "a means of adding quality controls to your case study" (p. 112). Rival explanations were explored in the legal process and surfaced in the court documents. This study explored two of these rival theories as part of this procedure: 1) the stress experienced by the selected superintendent was not extraordinary compared to the stresses experienced by other comparable superintendents; and 2) the burnout experienced by the selected superintendent was caused by issues not connected with the OBE controversy.

### **Audit trail**

An audit trail, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), provides for a systematic review of this study on the part of an external examiner. To ensure the possibility of review, the researcher has maintained an audit trail. This procedure permitted the researcher's committee members to verify interpretations. An audit trail included a list of sources that provided a structure for the researcher in composing the final report. This audit trail ensured accuracy by avoiding serious omissions. An audit trail of the key decisions made during the research process sustained the accuracy of narrative and data displays.

### **Member checking**

Stake (1995) recommends that research data be reviewed by the use of member checking. Maxwell (1996) defines member checking as "systematically soliciting feedback about one's data and conclusions from the people you are studying" (p. 94). Members, according to Stake (1995), "help triangulate the researcher's observation and interpretations" (p. 115). Maxwell (1996) maintains, "It is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning of what they say and the perspective they have on what's going on" (p. 94).

As part of the Iowa State University Human Subjects consent component, member checks were integrated as part of this study's design. Interviewed subjects were contacted (i.e., mail, telephone, and e-mail) to solicit their feedback and to comply with the agreement established in the interview process (see Appendix H).

### **External validity**

The issue of external validity concerns the topic of generalization of the findings. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), the lack of generalization is seen by traditional canons as a



weakness in the qualitative approach. To ameliorate for these weaknesses, Maxwell (1996) suggests restricting the use of internal generalizability to within the study.

Themes that emerged from the narrative of events were cautiously generalized within this case. As Geertz (1973) states, "The essential task of theory building...is to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them." Generalizing, both external and internal, was tempered by the understanding that this case represents an extreme case which limits transference to other settings (Maxwell, 1996; Yin, 1994).

### **Reliability**

Because the setting is unique, the study cannot be replicated in another setting. Instead, as Yin (1994) states, "The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in the study" (p. 36). By locating the researcher's role, according to Creswell (1994), the chances of replicating the study are greatly enhanced. The discussion of the conduct of this study serves as a guideline for conducting similar case studies, and the audit trail permits an external researcher to, as Yin (1994) describes, "repeat the procedures and arrive at the same result" (p. 27). This study in principle should be able to be replicated.

### **Report of findings**

A qualitative narrative emerged from the data analysis of this single case study. This narrative outcome strove to achieve thick description that describes, to borrow from Geertz's eloquence, "What the devil is going on?" (p. 27). This descriptive narrative was measured against the assembled chronological timeline to ensure all pertinent events and details were disclosed [within limits of anonymity] as the case developed.

Yin (1994) recommends using chronological structures to present the case study evidence in chronological order. In a single-case study, the rigor of this composition approach allows the researcher to create "explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory case studies" (p. 138). According to Yin (1994), "This approach can serve an important purpose in doing explanatory case studies, because causal sequences must occur linearly over time" (p. 139).

All the following components in this section address rival explanations as part of the outcomes of this case study in the course of its mission to answer the research questions.

The first subsection of the report displays data in a matrix consisting of the analysis of stressors of comparable superintendents and the selected superintendent.

The second subsection of the report compares and contrasts Gmelch's theoretical stress model with the chronological narrative outcome of the case study. The model was used as Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended, with the data to "explain, predict, and interpret what is going on" (p. 433).

A third subsection of the findings report contains an analysis of workers' compensation law as it applies to the interpretation of this case. As suggested by Creswell (1994), a table was developed to compare and contrast the evidence of the case with the established legal standards discussed in the literature review.

## **CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

School superintendents were called in the early 1990s to lead their districts into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by promoting and instituting many reforms including OBE. Philip Derts, superintendent of Black Rock School District, was one such leader.<sup>1</sup>

Proponents and opponents of the OBE issue played out roles in the Black Rock School District in this time period. This narrative explores the negative stressors placed on an individual superintendent facing a gauntlet of job demands augmented by conflicting personal, educational, and religious beliefs.

A chronological narrative explores the experience of Philip Derts, superintendent of Black Rock School District, and the resulting legal aftermath. The following headings were composed to guide the reader through the events in this case: The Black Rock School District, Background of Philip Derts, Candidate for Superintendent, First Years as Superintendent, Third Year as Superintendent, Fourth Year as Superintendent, and Aftermath: The Lawsuits. In Table 2 (see page 109), significant events from the narrative are summarized in a timeline.

In the course of the litigation that followed in the aftermath of Superintendent Derts' Black Rock School District experience, seven superintendents from similar-sized districts were deposed. From these depositions, Table 3 (see page 112) displays demographic information and summaries of their reflections of the dynamics of administrative negative stress in their positions. To compare and contrast with the other superintendents' data, a last column was composed to display the demographic information and reflections of Philip Derts.

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<sup>1</sup>Pseudonyms were used for people, places, and organizations on the state and local levels to ensure confidentiality.

The data gathered in the narrative of this study of Superintendent Philip Derts were used in combination with Gmelch's stress model. This section compared and contrasted Superintendent Derts' responses to the responses predicted in the stages of Gmelch's model.

An analysis of workers' compensation law was applied to this case study. Table 4 compared and contrasted the consequences of Superintendent Derts' reaction to negative stress in the Black Rock School District. This stress-standard was based on workers' compensation law of a number of states.

The court findings are examined in the last section of Chapter IV. This section will report the rulings of the State Industrial Commission Arbitration Decision, State Industrial Commission Appeal Decision, State District Court Ruling on Petition for Judicial Review, and State Supreme Court Decision.

## **The Narrative**

### **The Black Rock School District**

The Black Rock School District was a medium-sized school district on the Great Plains. The district consisted of 1,500 students who were served by two elementary buildings, a junior high, and a high school building.

The money to fund school programs was limited on both the district and state level. The farm crisis of the 1980s had left a mark on the district and its state. The board secretary stated, "Our school budgets were all very tight." Despite some financial hurdles, the Black Rock District prided itself on a reputation of being "on the cutting edge" of educational change. Consequently, the early 1990s found the Black Rock School District involved community reactions facing many other school districts' leaders across the United States. What would follow would leave scars on the Black Rock community still very much in evidence almost a decade later.

## **Background of Philip Derts**

The superintendent of the Black Rock School District was Philip Derts. In his late forties, Derts had been involved in education since graduation from college and had completed 13 years in school administration. Derts had moved up the educational career ladder without any outstanding personal problems. He had started out as a counselor, then principal first at a small school then at a larger one, and finally as a superintendent in the same district.

Superintendent Derts had been a college athlete and was elected captain of his team for his senior year. A building principal reflected that as his boss, Philip still retained that desire started in his college career to remain "a star." Philip had been active physically after college despite nagging sports injuries and repeated corrective surgeries. A teacher, also interested in fishing, commented: "He (Philip) had a knee problem, and he got to where he couldn't hardly walk with it, and he quit going to the boundary waters."

A teacher who worked closely with the superintendent on district committees stated:

Philip was a role model in the community. He had very conservative personal values.

He was very much what you would like to see in a superintendent and I felt he had a strong faith and he certainly valued children and education. He tried to exemplify the values that he felt were really strong.

A family friend and fellow faculty member commented when interviewed: "You know he was such a kid-oriented individual, just loved to be around them." The teacher added, "I think he liked more to speak in front of kids than he would the adults."

Derts diligently attended his three children's sports, lessons, and other school events. As a father, Philip held great hopes for the basketball career of his eldest son who was described by a seasoned coach and referee as "such an athlete." A Black Rock coach referred to the son as "quite a capable athlete." Philip was also involved in developing the basketball skills of his youngest

son. His daughter had taken a direction more in the area of the arts instead of sports, and Philip supported her choice. All three were what teachers and community people would call "really nice kids." He had met his wife Ruth at college and they seemed to be very happily married and devoted to each other. Philip demonstrated his caring nature in acting as a trustee for a mentally disabled cousin.

Philip was known in his community as a very religious person. As a district teacher observed, "He had a strong faith." Philip was an active member in his local Baptist church, housed in an attractive two-story building situated in a middle-class neighborhood. There, Philip was Sunday school teacher for adults, and sometimes taught with the assistance of Ruth. His church was proud to have the school superintendent as a member and often looked to him for leadership and, of course, expert advice on certain committees. A Black Rock administrator commented, "Philip's real connection to the community was through church, not the school." Much of his socializing revolved around his church and interacting with church couples. But with the school board president as a member, his church intertwined with school business.

Philip was known by fellow teachers and administrators as a sensitive individual. He was described by a number of colleagues as lacking that "thick skin" so necessary for survival in school administration. A teacher in the school system commented, "Philip took everything to heart." Another teacher and fellow church member stated, "I know he took them as criticism (anti-OBE comments), and he took them personally. Philip was criticized by a member of his church for supporting OBE and not being a good Christian. His wife Ruth recounted: "One person said, 'I hope you don't take this personally, Phil.' He said, 'I take this very personally.'"

The fact that Philip did take things personally may have stemmed from his early years. He had grown up in a home with an alcoholic father and had strained relationships with his mother and sister. He served as a teacher and coach, and later, eight years as a school guidance counselor

in a large school district. He was active in working with student-athletes in school and representing them with college recruiters. Philip occasionally joined another counselor, equipped with bags of popcorn, to visit a fellow staff member given to teaching history through the lens of a movie projector. Unable to secure the position as an athletic director in the district, Philip moved to a small school district as a secondary principal.

As a secondary building principal there, and later, after a move to the Black Rock School District, Philip's close ties to the students was an observed strength. A district teacher described Derts: "He was a very dedicated man to education [sic] and he wanted to do a good job and meet the needs of the public and students." A school counselor and also the president of the local teachers' association described Philip in his six years as high school principal: "I'd say he was a guy who knew what he wanted, knew what he wanted to do."

#### **Candidate for superintendent**

In the late 1980s, Philip completed his course work and obtained certification as a district superintendent. His administrative course work contained a strong OBE emphasis. Also that spring, the Black Rock superintendent announced retirement and his position became vacant. The lead paragraph of *The Black Rock Eagle* read: "After 19 years at the helm of one of the state's premier school districts, Black Rock Superintendent Edward Derby will step down as the school leader in July." Philip had applied at a similar sized district and was about to be offered the superintendency. Philip also applied for the newly vacant superintendency at Black Rock. With the support of key board members, Derts ascended from his position as high school principal to the district's superintendency.

Speculation in Black Rock still surrounds the selection of Philip Derts to lead the district. Some believe that the school board members did not want to lose the basketball playing skills of

Derts' oldest son. There was hope that the son's abilities combined with the skills of a future board president's son would provide a state championship for Black Rock. This was a goal held deeply by an influential board member.<sup>2</sup> The prediction came close to being true. The Black Rock basketball team would lose in the state finals in a heartbreaking game.

At the time, Derts had no experience as a superintendent and yet was appointed to that position in Black Rock. The "basketball theory" provides a probable clandestine explanation. People who subscribe to the "basketball theory" of Derts as superintendent point to a closed board session that affected the naming of Superintendent Derby's successor. The State School Board Association had conducted a search for the district. By early April, the names of five finalists being considered as candidates for the position of superintendent of the Black Rock School District were listed in alphabetical order in a Board of Education news release. A number of board members were observed meeting at night at Derts' house during the selection process.

Although documentation does not exist for this closed session when Derts was appointed as the superintendent, the researcher did uncover a quote that might support the "basketball theory." Derts was appointed by a unanimous vote; however, the board minutes of this meeting record the following statement from one board member: "Mr. Blank stated he would vote Aye but could not in good conscience support the manner in which the decision was made."

There were reasons other than a basketball player son to make Philip superintendent. Derts was a proven leader in the Black Rock School District. He was in demand to lead other districts as a superintendent. The district of the same size as Black Rock even thought they had him hired. He had connections with a major university and the State Department of Education. This would be important to the Black Rock district because it always took pride in being on the cutting edge

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<sup>2</sup>This former member of the board for nine years would a decade later declare bankruptcy and default 1.6 million dollars of loans obtained from the people of the Black Rock community. The newspaper article stated: "The creditors identify themselves as longtime friends, real-estate clients and fellow churchgoers. Now, they say, they feel betrayed and cheated."



of educational innovations. They had even sent people to California to work with Madelaine Hunter.

Derts was a tall, nice guy, with ties to the community and church. An elementary principal recounted the board's faith in their selection: "They thought Philip could handle it." A Black Rock secondary building principal stated:

I thought he was well suited for the position. I thought he was well versed in the position. He knew the district. He knew the high school building. The high school building in this district is the hardest building to manage and move forward. That's where the spotlight of the district is and things is. He was ready for that promotion.

The retiring superintendent, Derby, commented on his replacement and the superintendency: "I think Philip has done an excellent job as high school principal and I wish him well as superintendent. It has been a challenging position for me and will certainly continue to be a challenge."

### **First years as superintendent**

The school board secretary described her new superintendent: "Philip was a very hard worker, and he put in long hours." The school board president stated that not only did Philip take his job "very seriously," but also in addition, "I think once he became superintendent he set himself a little bit more away from people than he did as a principal." A secondary principal serving under him described Derts as "very reserved—never close."

A secondary principal saw the move for Philip as positive. He commented on the move to the superintendency: "This was the position that Philip always wanted. I think he liked the fact that he was out of day-to-day trench battle that goes on as an active principal with parents and students and staff members and those things."

Philip was never viewed as what the practitioners in education refer to as a "people person." The transportation director that worked in the same office as Philip on a day-to-day basis observed, "He could go a week and walk right by you—wasn't used to that. Derby would have coffee twice a day. Derts wasn't being mean. Just his way."

A building principal with over 30 years experience in the district also made a comparison between the two Black Rock superintendents:

Derby was a more relaxed leader—would encourage you into doing something—Philip was more direct...this is the way I want it, he would say. Derby was easier to get along with, a people person. You could tell a joke to him. Philip was more serious; not one to tell a joke to.

Derts' secretary stated that Philip "took his job seriously" and "the job was very important to him." A secondary building principal reflected:

His administrative style was pretty much a professional approach in nature: organized, to the point, not a lot of joking and frivolity. You always got a sense that Phil knew where he was going. How he was going to get there and those type of things. He was a very forthright, and very honest and very caring and very sincere in what he did and very supportive in what he did.

The Black Rock School Board president described Superintendent Philip Derts as "very dedicated. Probably too dedicated." A building principal echoed, "I think Philip tried very hard—too hard for his own good—he was following a person that was very good."

In addition to the building principals, a program director, Chris Waters, was hired the second year of the superintendent's tenure to fill out the superintendent's administrative team. This administrative position was created to supervise special programs, district innovations, and curriculum organizations. Derts did not want to work in the area of curriculum. There were 22

new state mandates at this time to develop and implement, and the necessary committees were formed. Although there was a challenge ahead for the school district, Chris Waters described the new boss as "optimistic and sure of himself."

### **Budget crisis**

In the late spring of Derts' third year as superintendent, *The Black Rock Eagle* carried a story stating the school district was at risk (according to Superintendent Derts). Contracts bearing a 3 percent raise had been negotiated and issued to teachers. Now the state legislature was debating drastic cutbacks in school aid. Non-negotiated support and administrative staff package increases were conditionally issued pending outcome of the legislature's decision on school financing.

"Just in recent days, the atmosphere at the legislature has changed drastically in school finance," Derts stated. "If the worst-case scenario comes out, we're looking at significant revenue reductions and 82 percent of entire budget is personnel. So if we have to go back to the drawing board and restructure our expenditures, we don't have much room to restructure for non-personnel items," Derts said. "We may have to go back and evaluate what we're going to do with the existing positions. I am hopeful the legislature will not go to that extent. But if some of the thoughts expressed become reality, it's going to put the district at risk," Derts said.

According to Chris Waters, things were made worse for Philip by his contacts with surrounding school superintendents. Through telephone conversations, Philip learned that his fellow superintendents had taken no financial chances. They had not issued contracts to their faculty. They had instead "pink slipped" large numbers of their teaching staffs to comply with their district's contract timelines. If the state legislature sustained the educational funding cuts, they would be covered. Derts was distraught. "At one point," recalled an administrator, "he had

decided to withhold the support staff contracts until he knew for sure what the funding would be because he might have to make up the difference, I suppose, by reducing contracts within the support staff because the professional staff had already signed off on the agreement, and their contracts were being signed."

Philip commented to the financial director/board secretary of the district, "I have bankrupted the district." She tried to reassure him that this was not the case. The district had the borrowing capacity to cover the income shortfalls. As it turned out, after two governor-called special sessions in June and July, the state legislature did restore most of the counted-on school district funding by amending the state funding formula.

Philip's relationship with the board remained supportive. In late July, the school board held their monthly meeting. Among the business conducted, after executive session, a motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to "approve a new three-year contract with Superintendent Derts and grant him a \$2,500 increase for the upcoming school year."

#### **Fourth year as superintendent: A changed man**

Few school people saw Philip during the summer break. However, according to Program Director Chris Waters, who worked with him over the summer, it was this budgetary crisis that set in motion the changes in Philip that would be observed early in the next January. The coordinator states, "I think he was particularly worried during about a six-week period of time there."

Chris Waters describes what happened next:

And so he took a few weeks off at the end of July, and he came back in August and that is when we began to see that he had changed. He had lost his confidence. He was not happy. He began to miss work. It sort of became a standing joke even in the

district, if it was Friday, he wouldn't be there. He would be home mowing his lawn. He would say he was going to go visit his mother. He was missing work. He would go get a haircut. He was finding ways not to be in the office. He wouldn't talk to people. If people just dropped in as they do in small towns and expect to talk to the superintendent, he would tell them that he can't see you unless you've scheduled an appointment. I mean he was absolutely a changed person.

None of the building principals, when interviewed, recalled these changes. This might be accounted for because the principals did not see Philip on a day-to-day basis. It was in January that other people outside the central office building began to take notice of the change in Philip's behavior. He had lost 20 pounds. A secondary principal suggested this weight loss was intentional on Philip's part and was related to the preparation for a knee surgery. However, Derts did complain to the program director that his clothes weren't fitting right and he was not sleeping. Chris Waters went on to observe, "Although Philip was not very personable at work, he was beginning to complain about those things." His wife Ruth later confirmed that during the spring, it became more apparent that Philip became even more reserved. His secretary noted, "We noticed that he was losing weight. I mean he wasn't going home to eat. He would be in his office working." The central administration office was housed in a small downtown storefront containing three office areas connected by a reception area. His secretary, a board secretary, the transportation director, and the district program director witnessed his remaining in his office and his declining offers to come out for coffee and donuts from his office mates. The board secretary commented, "He did not come out of his office to the kitchen area for even a drink of water."

This wasn't a radical change from his past office behavior. His secretary agreed on Philip being reserved: "He was not one to come out and visit, anyway." The school board president recalled, "You would never come in and find him back sitting having coffee with the girls, or

anything like that...." The board secretary stated, "Mr. Derts was a very quiet person.... If you wanted to know about his family, you had to ask or mention the fact about his children...he was not a person that offered any conversation." But it drew notice by those working with Philip on a day-to-day basis. Along with more limited socialization at the office, Philip changed, according to Program Director Chris Waters:

By January of that year, he had lost over 20 pounds and he commented that his clothes didn't fit. He was not sleeping. He couldn't relax and he was beginning, although Phil was not very personable at work, he was beginning to complain about those things. And we also began to notice little things, for example, he would bring some papers out of his office and ask her to make copies of certain items for him. So she would go to the copy machine and make these copies and bring them back to him and then maybe a half hour later he would bring the same things out and ask her if she would make copies for him. And she would say, "Phil, I just did that." And then he couldn't find them. And another thing that happened, Phil was very meticulous in his personal appearance and in his office. At the end of the day, his desktop was clean. His calendar was well kept. I mean there was not a piece of paper out of place in his office at the end of the day, but by January, February, March, we had begun to see that he was—although personally he still looked nice, and dressed nicely, he was very unorganized at work, he was misplacing things. He couldn't find papers that were on his desk. He didn't put things away at night. He frequently asked the secretaries for help to find things or to get things ready because he just didn't seem to have a mindset to be able to do it himself. So those symptoms were very evident.

### **OBE controversy at the state level**

Opponents to OBE and other programs linked to it were active on the state level. Dr. Jones, a State Department of Education official in charge of global education (closely tied to OBE in the critics' writings), describes his experience with Christian fundamentalists:

Well, there was a very innocent visit to my office one day, of someone wanting to look at some of the materials which had not been yet released. They had not yet been approved, but she took information from those materials and blew the information way out of proportion to the actual lessons and activities themselves. She started the accusations that these things that she pulled out of specific activities, were examples. For example, there was an activity suggesting that kids study Halloween traditions around the world or find out if other countries had Halloween, and this was evidence that we were promoting witchcraft.

To provide a flavor of the tactics used, the following is a published encounter between the State Department of Education and its opponents. This encounter made the front page in the *State Report*, a tabloid that promoted the Christian Right's cause:

Dr. Jones had in his possession a manual entitled "Catalog of Global Education Classroom Activities Lesson Plans and Resources." When I asked him where I could obtain a copy of this he told me it wasn't being published yet. As soon as this was available, I obtained a copy of it along with "Integrating Global Education Across the Curriculum" from the Department of Education. Listed in the bibliography of this guide was a book called *The Gaia Peace Atlas*.

The article continues to outline in two pages all about Gaia, an ancient Greek earth goddess. The article accused the State Department of Education of promoting New Age environmental spirituality. The author included a comprehensive "recommended reading list for further

research" for her readers and concluded the article with the following quote: "I ask you. Is Gaia scientific or religious? Do you want Gaia taught to children in our public schools?"

Dr. Jones continues his description of interactions with the Christian Right:

And there were other things like that in which there is another activity that was suggested that home economics could study different diets that were served in other countries. Some of which might be vegetarian. So all of a sudden, we (Department of Education) became promoters of vegetarianism in a meat-eating state.<sup>3</sup> And it was things like that, and see that was very clever strategy because that was not necessarily, that was designed to bring in people that were not necessarily from the far right, but average Midwestern farmers...they would think that we were promoting vegetarianism and undermining their efforts to earn a living in the state. The Pork Producers, the Beef Producers, the Farm Bureau, as well as people from the university started questioning what we were doing because they at least partially believed the lies that were being spread by these people.

Dr. Jones was new on the job and had not experienced such emotions by citizens before. He reflected:

Well, at the time I was a pretty new employee at the Department of Education and I had no idea that these kind of attitudes even existed out there. So I was not only surprised, but flabbergasted and quite stressed myself as I look back at those years when I was going through that.

The Christian Right had grouped all the State Department of Education and all the people who worked there as coconspirators in a much larger, diabolical plot. An issue of *The Report*

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<sup>3</sup>The Religious Right equated vegetarianism with being unpatriotic by telling American children that other cultures were superior.



contained opposition to the following programs: National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), New Standards Project, Family Resource Centers, Global Education, Work Start, higher order thinking skills, truancy laws applied to home-schoolers, New State Schools Development Corporation, Business Education Roundtables, QUEST curriculum, the state's teachers union, student portfolios, American 2000, Department of Human Services, sex education and human growth and development, New Age education, site-based decision making, and insidious Outcome Based Education. *The Report* contained the following quotation:

As articles in this issue indicate, Outcome Based Education has the potential to be one of the most dangerous new ideas in education in a long time. It gives educators a chance to change a district's educational goals behind closed doors, without public control. And the nature of the new outcomes consistently shifts the system from academics to behaviors (seen as government mind control).

The director of the State Department of Education, Dr. Mike Miller, also found himself a target of the Christian Right. *The Report* even carried a picture of him identifying him as the director of the Department of Education. It was not connected to the surrounding article and to this reader appeared in a sinister light due to his dark eyebrows. He drew such ire from conservative groups for his reform leadership, that the state Republican platform for the election year carried an adopted plank that called for his immediate dismissal. The state Republican platform highlights the state and local political environment of the time. The Christian Right expressed their educational beliefs in this political document that was to guide the Republican governor and his party in the upcoming election. The planks under the "3. Education" heading mirrored those explored in the review of literature and provided insights into the existing political climate:

**3.7 Creation Science.** We believe the study of Creation Science should also be taught in the public schools along with other theories of origin.

**3.9 DOE.** We support the dismantling of the Department of Education at the state and federal levels, and the return of education to local control.

**3.14 Home Schooling.** We urge the repeal of the state's restrictive new home school law and oppose all attempts to criminalize home educators. We oppose curriculum restrictions on home schoolers contrary to their moral and religious beliefs, and we oppose required student self-evaluations and clinical evaluations of home-schooled children.

**3.15 Immoral Values out of Schools.** We oppose the promotion of secular humanism, "political correctness," New Age concepts, the PETA (Protection and Ethical Treatment of Animals) philosophy, one-world government, situational ethics, and the teaching of homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle or behavior. We support repeal of the state's Global Education mandate, the Human Growth and Development mandate, and the "American 2000" plan.

**3.18 Local Control.** We strongly support local control of our public schools. We oppose any program dispensing information to our students as part of our educational system that would undermine the family unit and parent's responsibility for their children....

**3.19 Moral Values into Schools.** We support the teaching of traditional American values in our schools and colleges, such as honesty, integrity, and respect for proper authority, human life and dignity and teaching the recognition of the existence of a Supreme Being and the validity of moral absolutes. We support the teaching of patriotism, traditional American and world history, the 3 Rs, hard work, and respect for elders and property.

**3.21 New DOE Director.** Having opposed the reconfirmation of Mike Miller, current Director of the State Department of Education, we encourage Governor Smith and the legislature to replace him with someone who supports rural state concerns and traditional educational standards.

**3.30 School Health Programs.** We oppose the establishment of school-based clinics as a method of treatment for adolescent pregnancy because of their promotion of abortion and abortion referrals, their undermining of parental rights, and their absence of proven effectiveness in preventing teen pregnancy.

According to the department official, Dr. Jones, regarding Dr. Miller's situation:

I think they (the protests) were all instigated by the far right; he was under attack for global education, for human growth and development curriculum which promoted, they said, free sex and all the things they were against as far as abortion and sexuality, and Outcome Based Education itself they accused him of masterminding or being responsible for.

To compound matters, Dr. Miller had professional contact with Superintendent Philip Derts. Dr. Miller stated, "I would not say that we were close friends but we were certainly professional colleagues who were familiar with each other's work."

According to Dr. Miller:

The Department of Education did not specifically identify districts as pilots for OBE...we encouraged school districts at the local level to define the outcomes that they desired in their community and we encouraged community and professional staff participation in defining those outcomes....

### **Black Rock's OBE critics**

Critics did make themselves known to the newest school board member, Kent Duffy. Duffy had encounters with Betsy Morgan, vocal leader of anti-OBE home-schoolers faction. Their interactions revolved around youth activities. The board member recounts:

Her boys were still in my group when I first got on the board. One night, just probably a week or two after I got elected, maybe even before my first meeting, I don't know, I think it might have been the time between the election and the swearing in, she and her husband came to my house unannounced, uninvited, which is okay, that doesn't bother us. (She) stood in the kitchen doorway with paper and pamphlets and things about this horrible OBE which I had never heard of. I didn't know what it was from a hole in the ground. And what a horrible thing our schools are doing to our kids. And that was one instance and that was probably an hour. She would catch me after our youth meetings...and I would stand at my car for an hour or hour and a half and listen to the liturgy. I remember stating, "Betsy, I understand what you are saying and understand that you feel this deeply; I am very concerned but I don't see what the problem is." What little I did know. I was trying to read things as fast as I could. "What I do understand about OBE makes perfect sense to me. It really makes sense to me to decide what you want kids to learn and then you figure how you are going to teach it to them and make sure that they have learned it. I don't see what the problem is." And she says to me, "That's the problem. That's the problem, you don't understand what the problem is."

Betsy Morgan, her husband, and a few other people became the core of the public anti-OBE movement. A board member commented, "I have no doubt that they were sincere. They were on

a crusade, a mission. Morgan and her group used to run little ads in the shopper on OBE just to keep things stirred up."

Despite Morgan's criticism of public school programs, ironically, Betsy was not a public school parent. She had started home-schooling her children. At the time, home-schoolers could dual enroll. This arrangement allowed them access to testing, books, and any classes or programs they might wish to select. In return, the school district received funding for only one-tenth of a full-time student. Many in the Black Rock community took their home-schooling choice as an affront to their public school system. A building principal attempted to be very diplomatic when he observed, "Common people think home-schoolers are kind of different from the ordinary person."

Members of the administrative team did not see a clear connection between the anti-OBE home-schoolers' actions and Derts' reactions. A secondary principal stated, "Betsy Morgan was never the problem." Chris Waters concluded the anti-OBE group was just "pesky and annoying." A school board member summarized:

The forces that were coming against OBE were not that big. There weren't that many. They weren't that powerful. They were getting attention because they had a pretty well rehearsed script. They had a lot of stuff from outside that they, that someone else had prepared, that they were coming into the community. And the school district, Philip in particular, was not very effective at countering.

The transportation director, who was housed in the central office building, commented, "She (Betsy) was in there many times." The difference in Phil's behavior before they came and after they left was summarized by the transportation director: "After they left, he seemed to be uptight every time."

An elementary principal stated there was only a "small group of people." A secondary principal recalled that values "became an issue with the OBE parts of things, and that seemed to be the point most of the four or five people that were anti-OBE...." Chris Waters commented about attendance of community members at board meetings:

They were sort of our expected regular people. And a small group within that group was the group that kind of initiated some concerns about all of our innovations including Perry Dodge, Betsy Morgan, this guy from Pine City, I can't think of his name, and they were kind of the regulars who came to meetings and sort of protested anything we were doing no matter what it was.

**Private criticism of Derts.** According to the testimony of his wife and others, Philip was receiving a great deal of private criticism during the new year from the public on the issue during work and non-work hours. Ruth stated Philip received anti-OBE letters at home. According to Ruth, this criticism began to take the form of personal attacks and harassment. Philip reported to family and friends that he received threats and even attacks on his commitment to Christianity. On one occasion, such an attack was received while Philip was out, in an unpleasant phone call answered by one of Philip's sons at home.

#### **OBE in the Black Rock School District**

According to his building principals, Philip Derts was a strong proponent of OBE. Dr. Miller, the director of the Department of Education, agreed. He stated, "It was clear to me that Philip Derts desired to position the Black Rock School District as an exemplary school system in defining what the graduates of Black Rock should know and be able to do." The head of Black Rock's teachers union also concurred: "He was definitely a proponent (of OBE)." Under his

leadership, inservice speakers from the area educational agency and even national figures including Dr. Willard Daggett, director of International Center for Leadership in Education, was scheduled twice to address the teachers in his district. The topic of the upcoming June inservice was titled "What will school be like in 2000?".

Dr. Daggett had already visited the district that year. A teacher commented, "Daggett was willing to work with the district—one of the forefront districts—supportive of our efforts." Concerning Daggett's first speaking appearance in the district, a high school principal observed, "Daggett was received positively by the high school teachers. His speech was appropriate and topical."

According to a secondary principal, "We had a curriculum coordinator at Black Rock who was given the green light to really pursue Outcome Based Education." The curriculum coordinator, Chris Waters (who also served as the program director), in turn stated, "About 75 percent of the faculty wanted to implement such an OBE program at the Black Rock School District." However, an elementary principal reported his staff's feelings on OBE: "The whole staff was jittery about it. There were so many things in it to do and get it done right." The principal did go on to state that there were no moral objections to OBE from his staff.

Most educators describe OBE as simply a new approach by the community to identify what skills a student should achieve and how best to provide those skills. Even though the school district had started to examine goals with the community participating on committees, public criticism did not surface until this year. A letter to the editor expressed the concern of a writer who served on the district's OBE committee:

This letter is written out of total frustration after attending the Black Rock OBE

Committee meeting.... It seemed to me we were doing a very fine job. Please keep in mind again this committee was made up of 47 people from this community. Then all

of a sudden we are hearing from a few very vocal people, some of which are on the committee. The things I personally am hearing are very disturbing, and not true.

Things are being taken and twisted, altered and spread around, feeding on unfounded fears!... I am tired of all the negative talk and bashing this school system and staff have endured.... Please, people of Black Rock, wake up and support your schools, this is your child's future.

#### **January of the fourth year**

*The Black Rock Eagle* came out just once a week, on Thursdays. It carried the local news, sports, church announcements, and hardware store ads. With the new year came *The Eagle's* reporting of the formation of a Christian radio station for the area. The station would be a nonprofit, 24-hour-a-day Christian broadcasting station. The station's steering committee contained names of a number of people who were active in the Baptist church and would surface in this investigation as opposed to OBE. The station would carry the anti-OBE message over the airwaves.

The late January issue of *The Eagle* contained an article titled "School Reform—The Future is Now." The future was OBE. Chris Waters explained OBE in the press:

Outcome Based Education is really focusing the district and its resources toward certain identified ends for all students. There's no mystery to it. It's really a process of selecting and sorting what kinds of things we want to teach students that enable them to meet those ends. It might mean changing schedules. It might mean changing curriculum to a certain extent. It might mean changing requirements students have.

The article also contained many quotes by William Spady, an educator identified in the literature review, as the premier proponent of OBE.



Also in late January, the public hearings over a teacher incentive program held by the State Department of Education drew protests. The statewide newspaper, *The State Times*, reported: "Several speakers singled out a hot topic in state education—Outcomes Based Education.... Several carried signs, including 'Anytown Says Stop OBE.' One speaker said the state's push for outcomes amounted to mind control."

### **March of the fourth year**

In late March, *The State Times* carried an article entitled, "Philosophies Collide in Big City Schools." A school board member, labeled as a member of the Christian Right, was working to stop OBE in the state's second largest school system. The article stated, "She also sued the superintendent, seeking more information about the tests the district devised to measure the outcomes. A trial is scheduled for August 30<sup>th</sup>."

The following week, *The State Times* Sunday edition carried an editorial titled, "Values Critical to Education." The author of this pro-OBE letter was Chris Waters, the Black Rock program director. In the letter, Chris Waters suggests, "If the anti-OBE authors feel that shaping attitudes and beliefs is 'abominable,' perhaps they should find a private school system for their children free of any manifestation of social order or individual accountability."

This letter drew a response the next week. The author wrote:

If she wants to teach more of these destructive values and start them at an earlier age, as many educators do, she is free to practice on her own children. As a citizen of this state and of this nation, she has the right to do that. As a public employee, she does not have a right to inflict her values on the children of those who employ her.

Chris Waters did receive support from the building principals on her printed stand on Monday; however, Derts did not provide her with such accolades. Chris Waters recalled:

Then the next day, on Tuesday, he called me into his office and was very upset, and he said that there were 5,000 people in Black Rock who were mad at me about the letter I had written, that I had injured the district, that I needed to call all of the board members and apologize for having written the letter, and, in fact, I did do that.

Through hyperbole of the 5,000, the real message was that there was a powerful board member upset according to another Black Rock board member.

In the last days of March, *The Black Rock Eagle* carried an article on page 10 titled, "Black Rock Schools begin the process of change with community input." As project director, Chris Waters was quoted as saying:

Outcome Based Education is not a prepackaged, preassembled either mandated or given to us by the state or federal level. It's a process for defining curriculum goals and aligning your curriculum support where your goals are.... Outcome Based Education is a philosophy in which we pull together business people, community people, school people and take a very hard and honest look at what is happening in the world out there in designing an educational program that would help students live successfully.

As the program director, Chris Waters had not backed off from what she believed professionally. She offered to open up her records for examination for conspiracies but not even the out-of-town anti-OBE expert that had been active on the state level would take her up on the offer. Despite the following challenge, she never received criticism in the form of telephone calls or letters.

The opponents who have talked to me about issues are people who do not work in schools. They have never taught. They have had very little experience in any way in working with the school system. And yet they seem to have all the answers.

**Black Rock tax levy.** Superintendent Philip Derts had faced the budgetary dilemma of the previous school year. In the present year, the district still faced financial challenges. Under Derts' leadership, the district formed a committee to promote a tax levy election. The tax levy would provide funds for repair of leaky building roofs around the district. A tax levy could be approved by school board action for five years or it could go to the voters for a 10-year approval. An elementary principal who was also in charge of district buildings and grounds stated, "We started putting on metal roofs—leaks were always a constant figure." The headline of *The Black Rock Eagle* confirmed the need in April with the banner, "Three school buildings have major roof problems." The levy would also be used to purchase new technologies and provide funds for selected building additions. The district decided to attempt to pass the levy in the following October.

Derts was always concerned that controversies might detract from the voters' approval of the upcoming tax levy. "Philip was afraid that this controversy (OBE) would split the community," a tax levy committee member recalled. Other changes were being considered and debated in the district. Among the many innovations, teachers were discussing implementing site-based decision making, and a human growth and development committee was drawing some negative attention.

#### **April of the fourth year**

The ping pong discussion in the press over OBE continued in April. The following week's *The Eagle* contained a letter to the editor responding to Chris Waters' article. It warned about the use of "change" as an educational buzz word, about liberal educational philosophy, and not about dismissing the role of parents. In doing so, the writer stated, "We are the primary component in teaching our children the values necessary for them to become productive members of this global society." A true anti-OBE critic would probably not use "global society" even in retorts to

educators. This editorial also ended on a very positive note in stating, "It is apparent that the Black Rock School District and its educators are exemplary in their efforts to give our children the best possible education available." These sentiments, originality, and wording are contrary to the observations of a teacher on the OBE committee regarding the anti-OBE people. She stated, "They saw nothing positive about what was happening in the public school system, in our public school system."

The next week's issue of *The Eagle* included an editorial by a former Black Rock graduate who was teaching in a nearby district. This article was very supportive of the OBE efforts. It ends with the following encouraging statement: "It is my feeling that you will find that the system of Outcome Based Education makes sense."

The editorial page of this issue also contained an anti-OBE letter by Betsy Morgan. This article warned about the academics being left out and the wrong values being taught to the children. Morgan ends her article with the following:

Parents, get involved. Read, go to school meetings, ask questions, find out what is going on in your school and what is to come. I am told that none of these things I am concerned about can happen in Black Rock, but they have happened many other places and they are coming here. I don't believe anyone in our schools are out to hurt our children, but do we really want social engineering in our schools? I know I don't.

**Block scheduling in the Black Rock School District.** The junior high program attempted to move forward in promoting change. Superintendent Derts was becoming concerned that any attempt at change in the school district would bring forth a groundswell of controversy. It was possible that vocal critics of OBE would connect it with the block scheduling approach and cause problems.

The school board held a special meeting in April to get input on the block scheduling concept for the junior high school. *The Eagle* stated that this concept called for "switching from an eight-period (40 minutes each) day to a four-period (80 minutes each) day for seventh and eighth grade students." The issue came up for consideration sooner than planned because of an enrollment bubble in the next year's seventh grade. To enhance the need, the junior high principal warned that if block scheduling was not instituted, "increased enrollment would increase the number of classes by hiring more teachers or increase current class size." The principal also stated, "Our staff is convinced this is the way to go." The staff had invested a great deal of effort in researching block scheduling. In the article, a junior high teacher stated, "There has been over 300 hours of discussion." The board took no action on the concept.

It was usual for the committees to meet, but end with no positive action by the board. A secondary principal questioned the image of Black Rock being a progressive school district. He stated, "The impression was that Black Rock was on the leading edge, this was not the reality." As an example, he pointed to the months of committee meetings to form a human growth and development plan to present to the school board. Despite the fact that two district school board members had served on the committee that drew up the plan, it was defeated by a unanimous vote. A secondary principal bemoaned the district's many efforts: "Every time we fall flat." The OBE process was only in the planning stage. After a year of meetings, it still had not gone to the school board for approval, a step necessary for its implementation. A school board member recalled, "It never came close to implementation stage after two years."

Derts stated, "Our current way of doing things would only change after a thorough investigation of whether it's good for Black Rock's students."

What was unusual about the junior high meeting was Philip's behavior. As Program Director Chris Waters recalled:

The recommendation was to approve the recommendation of the junior high staff to move to a block scheduling for the next year which Phil was afraid was very controversial and he was concerned to the point where he suggested we move the board meeting to the junior high media center. Because that was a large room and we could accommodate a lot of people and he expected literally hundreds of people to show up in protest to this change in schedule. So I suggested to Phil that we start the meeting where we always did, in the administration office. If we found that we had too many people that we couldn't accommodate them, then we should adjourn the meeting and then move it to the junior high media center. It was my suggestion that we just wait and see if all the people really did show up. Well, at the board meeting that night, the junior high principal was there to make a proposal to the board and there were probably less than a dozen guests. Most of them had come to every board meeting.

The meeting did not turn out to be controversial or an angry mob scene. The program director concluded:

This large group of 100 people that he expected to arrive just never materialized. And frequently that was the kind of what we would see with Phil, he was very anxious about expected problems that just never happened. I mean they just didn't come up.

**Ministerial association.** Chris Waters recalled another situation when the controversy Philip perceived was not a reality. Philip had said, "There's a lot of controversy out there" in regard to the ministerial association meeting. As a result, Derts required all his administrators to attend. As it turned out, the meeting's topic was not controversial. The meeting was concerned with working together to schedule program dates for church and school. The Methodist church

Christmas children's program and the high school Christmas program (officially named the winter concert) had been scheduled on the same date. Chris Waters recalls, "The church's position was, 'Just let us know ahead of time so we can schedule our activities around the students' time.'"

**Anti-OBE video from Pennsylvania.** An anti-OBE video was circulated around the community. There was even a community viewing. This tape featured a lecture by Peg Luksik from Pennsylvania. *The Report* had carried a front page article praising Luksik for exposing federal educational agenda. Luksik and a fellow activist, Anita Hoge, were advertised to be in the state and appearing at a large city Baptist church. A curious secondary principal, encouraged by parents on a committee, obtained a copy of the tape and showed it to his faculty.

**School board meeting topic: OBE.** In late April, the Black Rock school board held a special meeting to obtain community input on Outcome Based Education. About 75 people attended the meeting. *The Black Rock Eagle* reported, "Of concern to many of those in attendance was a video which has been floating around the community. Several in attendance expressed concern about OBE, particularly whether or not it would involve students being graded on their attitudes, behaviors and values." In response, Superintendent Derts outlined reasons for change:

First is increased technology, which is here to stay. Second is the changing job market. There was a time when you needed few skills and not much education for a good paying job. Those jobs are disappearing. What does this do for the kid who's scraping by at the D-level and graduating? Are we shortchanging, knowing the ability to capture a good job is limited? Thirdly, the regular classroom is structured for the middle people to maximize their educational learning. Those below the middle are pulled out to special education, tutoring or at-risk programs. Those at the top end are

pulled out to the Talented and Gifted class. The fourth reason is all students can learn and succeed given the right amount of time and right learning style.

Concerning Luksik's anti-OBE video and requests to have a public meeting to show the video, Derts responded with a politically evasive answer: "There are some things which are inaccurate and it unnecessarily inflames things. I'm not saying the video is bad. There are things I do agree with."

Derts talked about receiving emotionally charged criticism over OBE. Derts did not want to deal with curriculum and that is why he hired the program director. Despite presenting for two hours, Derts was unable to sell the OBE concept to even the uncommitted patrons. A teacher admiringly described Chris Waters' curriculum knowledge and ability. The teacher stated, "Chris knew OBE better than Phil." The teacher also felt that Chris had the advantage of not being too tied to the community: "She could also get away from it."

In April, his wife Ruth remembered that Philip began to have difficulties sleeping at this time. She, moreover, observed changes in Philip's thought processes. She saw how he became indecisive at home. Ruth stated, "He couldn't even decide whether to play golf, whether to go to eat, what to do, and this was very uncharacteristic." Philip also expressed as the spring continued that he had difficulty concentrating and could not get his mind off of certain controversial issues in his job.

A teacher and family friend hunted, fished, and attended church with Philip. He witnessed a change in his friend and boss:

I knew him as a very decisive man.... Philip would take information and make a decision, and he would most of the time be right, and he made decisions very well.

He was a very decisive man. As I saw his mental (health) decline, that was no longer the case.



### **May of the fourth year**

**Outside anti-OBE speaker.** In Black Rock, a week after the OBE school board meeting, a statewide anti-OBE speaker presented his message at the local Legion Hall. He had been involved in many anti-OBE protests mentioned earlier and was listed as the publisher of *The Report*. He identified himself to Chris Waters as representing fundamentalists and Christians. When asked by Waters to clarify, he responded, "Fundamentalist means we believe in the Bible and we take the Bible literally." His address was described as being so outlandish that some people, including teachers, just walked out shaking their heads.

**The state abandons OBE.** Two days later, *The State Times* carried the following educational news story:

The State Department of Education is abandoning its plan to establish statewide student performance goals because the effort became too controversial, Department Director Mike Miller said Thursday.... In a surprise move Thursday, the Department bowed to that pressure.<sup>4</sup> "I don't have enough support in the state to move it forward," Miller said.

This news caused Derts even more pain. He had worked hard to convince the community that the goals were to be local. Now, people were reading that the state had a plan to establish standards and goals. According to Ruth, people (some looking for a conspiracy) began to question Philip on this point.

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<sup>4</sup>Dr. Miller would resign later in the year under intense political pressure.

**Telephone call to Dr. Miller.** In a telephone conversation between Miller and Derts, Miller offered to write a letter to the local newspaper. Derts, feeling this would probably just make matters worse and adversely affect the tax levy vote, declined the offer. Dr. Miller recalled:

It was clear to me in the conversation that Philip was highly stressed and somewhat incoherent in describing the situation. I did offer to help him write an article or to send staff into the community to help explain the whole outcomes based education effort and that it was to be a community-driven process. He indicated over the phone that he didn't think it was necessary to do that; however, I did talk with key department staff alerting them to the Black Rock situation and my view that Philip Derts needed support.

**Graduation prayer.** Betsy Morgan did not confine her concerns and editorial skills to just OBE. Public prayer at graduation became her new topic. The school board had just voted to ban school prayer at commencement due to recent court rulings. Although this topic dealt with separation of church and state, her letter had a pre-written format to it much like those viewed by Dr. Jones with the State Department of Education. At the bottom of her editorial on this occasion, Betsy did cite her source, *Citizen Magazine*, a publication of Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family, an international nonprofit Christian organization.

**Drug Free School meeting.** Normal school routine became difficult for the Black Rock superintendent. In late May, Philip's mental state significantly worsened and people observed unusual behaviors. The stress Derts was under became apparent to some of his staff members. The Drug Free School Committee had asked Derts "to attend a meeting and explain his viewpoints." Philip broke down and cried when he ordered a halt to the circulation of

informational cards to students. A school counselor reflected on Derts' crying with fellow committee members after the meeting:

I just asked them what they thought led up to it, and I don't recall what their response was, but they just said they thought he felt comfortable enough with the group that was there because he had worked with many of them as a principal and so on to apparently relieve some stress he was under at that point...he had to countermand something he had indicated pretty strongly he wanted us to do.

The high school principal remembered the issue being discussed by the district administrators:

The building principals saw a need for having this kind of (health) information readily available to students for whatever they needed help for; whether it be a sexual issue, a drug issue, an alcohol issue, or whatever. Eating disorder issue, or anything that had to do with health and human growth and development. That they could get the help if they needed it. So we...they requested it as a committee that the district print these cards and we distribute them to the kids.

Although this was part of the Red Ribbon Committee's program, there was the fear that some groups opposing birth control and abortion in the community might become upset with certain referrals provided on this card. A counselor and head of the Drug Free committee recalled reviewing the contents of the card with Derts. The counselor stated, "Phil explained to me his reservations and did not think the timing of it was real good."

The high school principal recalled the situation with the health card and what happened next outside the school buildings:

It had Planned Parenthood's number on it. The minute that these community people found out that that was on there, they started coming unglued and that word got to the superintendent and the next thing we knew the whole idea was being scrapped.

The superintendent's problem with indecision also came apparent in this situation. Derts later changed his mind about handing out the cards, but it was then too late to circulate the cards before the end of the school year at Black Rock. The committee decided to wait until fall student registration to distribute the cards.

#### **June of the fourth year**

**End-of-the-year faculty meeting.** The school year ended in early June. To the surprise of most of the district administrative staff, Superintendent Philip Derts announced an all-district faculty meeting for the teachers of Black Rock School District. His staff was concerned. They had witnessed, working with the superintendent on a day-to-day basis, that Philip had become disorganized, confused, and generally showed signs of being under tremendous stress.

Philip felt there were issues that needed to be addressed by the leader of the school district. End-of-the-year meetings were uncommon in the school district; however, given the topics of the past school year, building principals were not totally surprised by one being called. They notified their staffs to report to the high school cafeteria. A secondary principal reflected:

As I recall, the meeting was a year-end meeting Mr. Derts had called for the entire staff which in itself was not unusual. The unusual aspect of it was that the message that he gave to the staff came across as a bit fragmented. Not very well organized. Had double meaning types of things in that part of it. So it was very much unlike him because he was very organized and very precise. And very detailed on those type of things, so it left a lot of people in wonder at the end of the meeting.

From notes written on paper with overhead marker, Philip addressed his district teachers and administrators. His project director was just hoping he could make it through. Chris Waters had reason to be concerned because of the meeting they had had the day before. She recalled:

He kind of leaned back in the chair, kind of gave a big sigh, and in general looked concerned. He expressed that he felt we needed to drop outcome based education because of the controversy. He did, in fact, start to cry at that meeting.

The director stated:

I had volunteered to talk to the staff about Outcome Based Education. He seemed very appreciative that I would do that for him. The next morning he came in, however, on Friday morning and said he had changed his mind. He wanted to talk to the staff.

The uncommon, as of late, self-confidence demonstrated by Derts in the morning had given way to indecision as the meeting time grew near. Building principals were hoping for direction and a straight line to follow. Teachers were looking for some explanations and also for direction for the future. The district projects director hoped that Philip would make it through the speech.

Reconstructed from his notes and checked by those attending the end-of-the-year meeting, his message contained the following:

I am tired of being held hostage. We have had to deal with an imposed system of state mandates. We have experienced heated debates about morals and values. It has taken us hostage and it's taken a toll. Mistakes have been made and you staff members deserve more support. You deserve better. This has been an unprecedented year and of my 26 years on the job, I cannot remember more controversy and suspicion. We need to break out and be on the cutting edge. We need to drop our initiative<sup>5</sup> with its baggage, misunderstandings, and fear. We can discard the OBE controversy and develop our own approach. I feel that a burden has been lifted from my shoulders.

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<sup>5</sup>Although the notes read "drop OBE," two principals felt Derts did not come right out and say this.

With the support of the superintendent, with the support of each other, we can pull together and get this train on track. We need to move forward and do "what's right for kids." This August, we will start the school year with new vigor and enthusiasm. We will make a positive difference.

**Different interpretations.** Teachers and administrators came away from the meeting feeling the speech was filled with mixed messages. A coach recalled the speech referring to OBE as a "dead issue." Another teacher recalled Derts issuing an apology for "allowing the district to be held hostage by some of the opposition within our community." Additionally, a counselor and coach didn't recall Derts making it "plain" that OBE was going to be dropped by the faculty and staff. However, the teacher did recall, "He (Derts) was going to move ahead above the pressures that he encountered and that the following year was going to be a progressive year for the Black Rock School District."

The president of the Black Rock teachers' union recalled:

He indicated that he was making decisions that were not in the best interests of the school district, you know, trying to keep things smooth, and that he was at that time no longer being held hostage by these people, that he was acting—going back to acting as an educator and making decisions that were in the best interests of the school district.

A high school teacher and coach recalled:

We were just investigating it anyway...I mean it wasn't something that is written in stone this is what we were going to do...a lot of schools in the state were doing the same thing, were just investigating it.

There were concerns voiced for the superintendent, the person. A teacher, a member of the district's OBE committee who had worked closely with Philip, called a colleague that night and shared, "Philip is not going to be with us another year." The prediction proved prophetic. Philip Derts was not in attendance at the school district's meeting that next August.

**Mental shutdown.** The next day was Saturday. Philip did not go with Ruth to a wedding that night. All day he had been feeling ill.<sup>6</sup> More alarming, on the Sunday morning in June, Ruth found Philip motionless, sitting in a chair, complaining that his "mind was shutting down." Ruth called a friend, Walter Murphy, a mental health counselor, and many other family friends who all came over that day to help. After talking with Philip, Murphy contacted an out-of-town psychiatrist, Dr. Book, with whom he worked and who could legally prescribe medication. Murphy also set up an appointment at this time for both the Derts to consult with Dr. Book on Monday. To assist Philip in sleeping, the psychiatrist prescribed the needed medication over the telephone. When taken, Philip immediately fell asleep for three or four hours. It was still Sunday morning.

Over 20 people, according to Ruth, came over to their house that day. Most of the visitors were identified as people from the Baptist church. During that day, four of the visiting deacons prayed with Ruth and Philip.

It was suggested on Sunday that Philip take some time off work. Jim Tuss, a fellow church member, friend, and teacher in the Black Rock district, arranged a meeting between Philip and the office secretaries that Sunday evening to inform them Derts would be taking some time off that week.

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<sup>6</sup>Due to the onset of diarrhea which may have been viewed as a sign of depression.

**Sunday night office meeting.** The meeting was held at the downtown central office. Jim Tuss called the two central office secretaries. One remembered Jim saying over the telephone, "Mr. Derts was having some problems, and he needed to visit with us." At the meeting was Jim Tuss, Philip Derts, the superintendent's secretary, and the board secretary. Chris Waters was attending an out-of-town wedding and was unavailable for the meeting.

After coming into Derts' office, the board secretary recalled:

Mr. Derts said to us that he was mentally and physically exhausted and that he would be taking some time away from the office. He didn't know how long or when he would be back. He had some things that he wanted us to complete.... He almost looked in a collapsible state.... I thought to myself, how awful to see such a big man come down.

Derts' secretary remembered that unusual Sunday night meeting. She recalled, "He (Derts) said that he was mentally and physically exhausted, he was losing weight, he couldn't sleep, he couldn't eat, and just about started to break down."

**First visit to Dr. Book, psychiatrist.** On the following Monday, Ruth drove Philip to meet for the first of three times with a psychiatrist, Alice Book, MD. Dr. Book was the one who had prescribed the medication Sunday over the telephone. Dr. Book conducted a clinical interview but did not run any tests. Dr. Book explained the interview process:

First of all, we try to understand what the problem is from the parent besides getting the basic data, how they grew up.... Then we get in to the problem and try to assess how he perceives his problem and what his feelings are and what he's coming for.

Dr. Book affirmed that Philip was quite depressed, tense, anxious, and was not eating or sleeping well. Philip identified a work-related stressor. According to Dr. Book:



He told me stories like in the job, for instance, the payroll or the salary of the teachers don't come on time...then the stress of borrowing money from the bank and so that the salary comes on time.... And the outcome based project that he and the opposition of the people or the community, that was very heartbreaking for him.... That's what he really focused a lot on.... He was disappointed that some people don't agree with that kind of project he has for that school year, but also feeling disappointed that a lot of the people who work with him in promoting that program will be very disappointed if he would not be able to carry on....

Dr. Book related that she saw Philip as an extremely sensitive individual who tried very hard to do what was right and was upset because church members were not endorsing his plans. Her diagnosis was "an acute reaction to stress." In addition she concluded, "The job was the stressful thing." Upon that diagnosis of acute reaction to work stress, she prescribed anti-depression and anti-anxiety medications.

Based on their meeting, Dr. Book developed a "treatment plan" (see Appendix I). Its short-term goal was to "lift him off depression" and the long-term goal was "career planning in other options." Book also suggested that Derts consider talking to his school board members and possibly taking a leave up to a semester.

Philip and his wife Ruth tried to follow Dr. Book's plan. After the consultation, they visited with a nearby superintendent for some advice. After returning to their Black Rock home, the Derts walked next door to inform their neighbor, one of the elementary principals, what was going on. The principal was surprised to see them come over because, "He (Derts) wasn't the kind to get very close to anyone, I don't think. Maybe he was close to some people. I don't think he was close to school people."

Although the principal never learned who exactly was causing the problems for the superintendent, he provided some advice based on his 30+ years experience as an administrator in the district:

Well, Phil and Ruth both came over to the house. I could tell he was really distraught. You know, I didn't know how distraught he evidently was, but I knew he was really having problems with it and so we talked about OBE and so forth and that people were giving him so much trouble over this and he didn't know what to do, and I just told, I told Phil, I said "Look, the whole thing isn't worth all the problems you're going through...." I hadn't received phone calls, but he said he was having a lot of that. And so I said, "Phil, why don't we back off? We can do it some way. We can get the job done without calling it OBE.... They will understand." I mean there's no problem with that...we'll still get the job done and he could save face as a superintendent and he wouldn't be letting the teachers down. Because he was concerned about that too, that the teachers would see this just backing off because of criticism and stuff.

Philip did take some time off. He spent the next few days of that week at a friend's cabin on a nearby small lake. He returned three days later to work on Friday.

The anti-OBE group had not taken the week off. *The Black Rock Eagle* carried an editorial signed by Betsy Morgan's husband. The letter ended with the following:

I think that the conservative Christians reacted to this sooner than most because we have seen our values and beliefs being steadily removed from the school systems. Under outcome based education our children will be tested and remedied on their values, attitudes, and beliefs. I urge all parents, not just Christians, to find out what

outcome education is about and not just accept what is being brought into our schools without question.

Philip did not get better despite the visit to Dr. Book, the prescribed medication, and the days at the lake. On the next Sunday, Philip had a "panic attack." This full-blown one was in front of one of his fishing and church friends. His wife Ruth had seen panic attacks start in May. She described her husband's panic attacks "like having a heart attack. I guess, and you start sweating, a lot of sweat...his face would get red and it was just real intense."

**Second visit to Dr. Book.** In the middle of June, 10 days after his first appointment, Philip returned to Dr. Book's office. Philip continued to show symptoms of depression. He talked about changing jobs and becoming a truck driver. This may not have been a "metaphorical" phrase. Derts had driven a concrete truck for a summer job while a college student. The superintendent had discussed the topic with the transportation director, who recalled, "In fact, he told me one day, he said, 'I'd be better off if I went out and drove a truck. I could make good money and I wouldn't have all the stress.' He told me that."

Dr. Book did not doubt that Philip was serious. She was surprised though and asked him about it. Philip responded, "Well, if I go from point A and go to point B, then my job is done."

Again, Dr. Book recommended time away from his job, but he declined, stating that he had no assistant and no one else at the time could do his work. He again expressed concern over criticism he received at church. Dr. Book remembers Derts' erratic behavior:

He was fighting against some of the church members and that was really, really heavy on him. In fact, he emphasized this religion to me. This man stood up and said to me, "You know, Doctor, my religion is very important to me," and then he sits down.

**School board votes to drop OBE.** Four days later, Philip had a meeting with the Black Rock Board of Education. It started at 7:00 and did not adjourn until almost midnight. There were a great number of items on the meeting's agenda including financial reports, music boosters' request for approval of a fund raiser, high school grade point average study, senior high handbook changes, gifts to the district, insurance bids, discussion of union relations concerning school governance and site-based decision making, strategic planning committee report, recommendations for the upcoming tax levy, and finally, OBE. *The Eagle* noted, "OBE has come under fire in recent months."

Superintendent Derts recommended against pursuing OBE in light of the state's decision to drop it. Instead, Derts suggested that the district restructure the OBE goals and create the district's own process to meet its needs. The school board followed his recommendation and voted 4-1 in favor of abandoning OBE. The one dissenting member stated:

I don't want to move away from the attitude that all students can learn. I'm afraid that by saying we're moving away from that (OBE), then what are we moving toward?...

I think OBE has become sort of a scapegoat for the problems we have in education.

To me it lacks integrity to walk away from it.

Four school board members did not agree. A board member who voted with the majority stated: "OBE has received a lot of negative connotations. I think it would be wonderful if we could get ourselves moved in the right direction to improve education and get away from the controversy surrounding OBE."

**Thoughts of death.** His wife testified that Philip became even more indecisive after this meeting and talked more about quitting his job. Philip even admitted to his wife that he was

beginning to have suicidal thoughts and that he had left work that day to "drive around and around."

The next morning, Philip attended a funeral of a family friend's father. He hadn't known the father; he attended to support his friend. The principal of the Black Rock Catholic school remembered seeing Philip there. She commented that despite school people including board members attending, Philip sat by himself, and he didn't talk to any of the school people there.

**Last visit to Dr. Book.** A week later Philip met for a third time with Dr. Book. This time Ruth did not go with him. Philip recounted to Dr. Book, driving to a park. There, he had suicidal thoughts, but stated that he went home because he loved his wife and children. Dr. Book noted that "he had thoughts but no plans.... He reassured me—he said, 'I have no plans, and I will not do a thing like that to my wife.'"

Again, Dr. Book made the recommendation to Philip of an extended absence. She wanted to call the president of the school board immediately to set it up. Philip refused to approve the call. Dr. Book persisted and finally persuaded Derts to arrange a meeting to be held early July. At this meeting, the school board president, Ruth, Dr. Book, and Philip would discuss an extended absence from the Black Rock superintendency. The doctor also suggested that hospitalization was appropriate, but this was again rejected by Philip. Dr. Book ended this last meeting by making arrangements for Philip to contact another colleague if he needed help while she vacationed for a week.

**Death arrives.** On the last Saturday of June, two days after his third meeting with Dr. Book, Philip got up early and left his home alone. When Ruth awoke, she thought he had gone out for doughnuts. Instead, Philip went to the hardware store and purchased a length of plastic

black hose and duct tape. Then he drove to a secluded area near a local lake and ski area. This was an area where he had fished with a friend on a number of times to get away from the job, but in this last year, he had not.

The next people to come in contact with Philip Derts were not parents, teachers, or board members, but a couple of horseback riders. The voluntary statement to the deputy sheriff by one of the riders read:

I was riding horses with a friend. We chose to ride back in the trees, where we came across the car. I dismounted my horse and told Jim to go get help. Ken left for help and I went to the car to get the man out. The car was not running, a large black hose had been hooked from the exhaust through the driver's window. The man was not conscious but showed signs of life. I pulled the towels out of the window around the hose, unlocked the door, shook the man, tried to get a response. At this point I noticed the keys were not in the ignition. They were in his right hand. When I pulled him out of the car they fell to the floor. From that point on I tried to cool him down until help arrived.

Tragically, finding the keys in his hands may have indicated that Philip had changed his mind but was physically too late. On arrival, the EMTs did find a weak pulse, but before getting to the emergency room, it stopped. CPR was started but was discontinued due to lack of response. The cause of death was listed as carbon monoxide poisoning. Also on the Certificate of Death on line 14b which asked "Kind of Business or Industry," the completed space read "School Superintendent."

The pressures of his job as superintendent of Black Rock School District no longer held any sway with him. Philip had committed suicide. The carbon monoxide had done its work. Superintendent of Black Rock School District, Philip Derts, was no longer held hostage by OBE.

**Aftermath: The lawsuits**

Two years later, a claim for workers' compensation by Philip Derts' widow, Ruth, named the Black Rock School District, as Philip's employer, and the school district's insurance carrier as defendants. Workers' compensation law provided assistance to employees or their dependents for compensation for injuries or death attributable to their employment. The types of compensation under the law are mental and related expenses, disability benefits, and death benefits. The claim asked for Philip's weekly salary (\$708.96)<sup>7</sup> to be paid to Ruth and her children. The salary would be calculated from the time of his death, and payments would continue until Ruth's remarriage or death. The claim also asked for his last medical expenses (\$164.00) and funeral expenses (\$5,000.00).

At the heart of the claim was this compound question: "Whether Philip Derts' death arose out of and in the course of employment or whether compensation is barred under state code as a willful injury (suicide)." A mental injury is caused by mental problems including stress-related depression. This is termed a "Mental/Mental" injury, which is a mental injury without an accompanying physical injury. These cases are compensable only if the stress is unusual, and the stress constitutes an abnormal working environment. The construct maintains that if, after proving medical causation, an employee establishes that the mental injury was caused by workplace stress of greater magnitude than the day-to-day mental stresses experienced by other workers employed in the same or similar jobs, benefits should be awarded.

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<sup>7</sup>At the time of his death, his gross wage was \$1,221.00. A rate booklet was used to determine benefits.

### **Derts' four years: Timeline of events**

Table 2 shows a summary of Derts' four years in the superintendency. The events are displayed in chronological order in the following four sections: First two years as superintendent, third year as superintendent, and fourth year as superintendent. The fourth year as superintendent orders events from January to the end of June. Derts' precipitous mental decline is dramatically illustrated in the events of May and June.

At a hearing before the state industrial commissioner, Dr. Book testified that Derts' suicide was the result of depression, caused by work stress, especially stress from the OBE controversy. Two national experts, a suicidologist and a psychiatrist, reviewed the case and Book's records and notes. They agreed with Dr. Book's conclusion.

The defense's expert presented a rival theory for the cause of Derts' suicide. He maintained the job did not play a role. This expert believed Philip's personal characteristics included obsessive/compulsive behavior, and Derts' growing up in a dysfunctional home prevented him from handling the regular stresses of his job. This expert's testimony was rejected for several reasons including his qualifications were not as impressive as the other experts and his demonstrated lack of knowledge about the case. The dismissal of his testimony was also based on the expert's suggestion that Philip had a suicide trial run of gassing himself with carbon monoxide while sitting in his office working on his computer. Derts had rushed out with a red face, and this is what the expert used to determine that the superintendent made a rehearsal suicide attempt.

The incident that the expert referred to had occurred in May. The transportation director witnessed Derts leaving the parking lot and described the following:

I was in the back working on a bus, and he came out and he went down the alley.

Faster than I ever seen him go, squealing the tires. And I went in the office and I

asked the girls. (I asked) What was the matter with him? And they said he been on the



Table 2. Derts' four years: Timeline of events

First two years as superintendent:

- Philip Derts completes superintendent certification including classes on OBE.
- Derts moves from Black Rock High School principal to Black Rock superintendent.
- Derts hires Chris Waters as project director.
- Derts gives Chris Waters the green light for OBE.

Third year as superintendent:

- The state legislature reduces expected school district funding.
- Derts becomes concerned over issued teachers' contracts and possible budget shortfalls.

Fourth year as superintendent:March:

- *The State Times* reports problems for a large school district over the OBE issue.
- Chris Waters' response with pro-OBE editorial in *The State Times*.
- Chris Waters is interviewed by *The Black Rock Eagle* and outlines a pro-OBE approach for the Black Rock School District.

April:

- First editorial critical of OBE appears in *The Black Rock Eagle*.
- *The Black Rock Eagle* prints one pro-OBE editorial and the local anti-OBE editorial by Betsy Morgan.
- Betsy Morgan writes another anti-OBE editorial concerning Black Rock in *The Black Rock Eagle*.
- Black Rock school board holds a public meeting on OBE.

May:

- Outside anti-OBE speaker and editor of *The Report* presents at the Black Rock Legion Hall.
- Derts displays strong emotions at a Drug Free meeting held to discuss student health cards.
- *The Black Rock Eagle* carries a pro-school graduation prayer editorial by Betsy Morgan.

June:

- Derts mentions "being held hostage by OBE" at a year-end faculty meeting.
- Derts complains of his "mind shutting down" and prayers are held over him by church deacons.
- Psychiatrist Dr. Book prescribes sleeping medication over the telephone for Derts.
- Sunday night meeting is held with Derts and the central office secretaries.
- Derts attends first meeting with Dr. Book and results in a medication and treatment plan.
- Derts and his wife Ruth visit an elementary principal at his house to discuss the situation.
- Derts stays three days at a cabin on a small lake.
- Derts returns to work.
- Anti-OBE editorial by Mr. Morgan, Betsy's husband, in *The Black Rock Eagle*.
- Derts has a severe panic attack.
- Derts states he would "rather drive a truck" at the second meeting with Dr. Book.
- Black Rock School Board votes 4-1 to drop OBE on Derts' recommendation.

Table 2. Continued

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- Derts shares suicidal thoughts with Ruth.
  - Derts attends the funeral of friend's father.
  - Derts shares suicidal thoughts with Dr. Book, but he refuses to be hospitalized.
  - Derts purchases a hose and commits suicide.
-

phone and he come out with a red face about 1:30 in the afternoon and he just tore down the alley.... He usually backed out and went down normal, but that day he went through the alley like a 17-year-old kid. (laughs) That's why I went in to ask them.

You know, (to ask) what was going on.

Ruth's lawyers dismantled this rival theory with little trouble. His experience did not favorably compare to the two expert witnesses on Ruth's side. The defendant's expert testimony was discounted in the judgment because of his lack of knowledge about day-to-day stresses faced by school superintendents.

The legal inquiry revolved around the issue of day-to-day stresses. The core of workers' compensation case law is based on a comparison between a worker's job stress and that of another worker or workers doing the same job. The parties deposed seven other school superintendents from around the state. The superintendents' matrix was composed to display data gathered from their depositions.

### **Superintendents' matrix**

In this case, seven superintendents from similar-sized school districts were deposed. Their testimony was used to determine the job stressors experienced by comparable school superintendents. Table 3 provides a display of data gathered from the superintendents. It includes demographic information: Years experience as a superintendent and size of district (number of pupils, number of principals, and district population). Other categories displayed include: Hours worked per week, major stressful events, words associated with events, and reflections on the superintendency. The superintendents' data and experiences are visually contrasted with the last column composed to reflect those of Philip Derts.

**Table 3. Superintendents' matrix: Experiences of seven public school superintendents and Derts during the early 1990s**

	Superintendent							Derts
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
<b>Years experience as a superintendent</b>	7	14	12	23	16	21	29	4
<b>Size of district:</b>								
<b>Number of pupils</b>	700	1,000	3,600	1,700	2,000	1,500	800	1,400
<b>Number of principals</b>	2	3	10	5	6	3	2	4
<b>District population</b>	4,000	5,000	20,000	9,000	16,000	8,000	5,000	8,000
<b>Hours worked per week</b>	60-65	60 or more	50-60	50-60 (summer less)	More than 40	60	60 (45 in summer)	40-60
<b>Major stressful events</b>	OBE, three lawsuits	OBE, boiler/asbestos, lawsuit over sexual harassment, principal's release hearings	School closing, ½ million in budget cuts, firing state supreme court case, human growth and development issue, a student's murder	Staff reduction and layoffs	No confidence vote after negotiations, state supreme court case over teacher molestation of his students	Sp. Ed. lawsuit, firing a teacher-coach, a principal's release, multi-age grouping	School closing with a lawsuit. At every board meeting we have large crowds.	OBE, health cards, teachers' contracts, tax levy

Table 3. Continued

	Superintendent							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Derts
Words associated with events	Emotionally draining issue	People talking about your values. Hard to get away from.	Can't get it out of your mind. It occupied a lot of my thoughts.	Get rid of good people.	We don't need this. People confused it OBE. 200 people at the board meeting. Threatened with physical violence.	No-win situation. A lot of bad publicity. 200 to 300 people at the meeting. Just drug on and on.	People making accusations. Didn't have a chance to get away from it. There was a constant bombardment on this issue, which is most stressful.	Being held hostage by OBE. My mind is shutting down.
Reflections on the superintendency	I am responsible ultimately. Anytime you reach into someone's pocket, there is controversy.	You notice people noticing you at a restaurant.	People start talking about issues related to school.	I'm involved in the firing of someone that I'm not sure is personally responsible for their having to go.	Luckily I had a board who supported me. There is no protection for superintendent.	24-hour-a-day job, 365 days a week. At the country club you're going to get questions.	Definitely not Mr. Popularity all the time with everybody, and there's going to be issues that come up that people don't like.	I'd be better off if I went out and drove a truck. I cannot let the people working with me down.

The category "years of experience as a superintendent" ranges from 7 to 29 years. The lowest number of years experience was that of a superintendent who had over 20 previous years experience as a principal. The average of the seven superintendents was over 17 years experience. In contrast, Philip Derts had only four. The group of superintendents would have had an average of over 13 years experience when Philip Derts became a superintendent at Black Rock with zero experience as a superintendent.

"Size of district" for the seven superintendents ranged from 700 to 3,600 pupils. "Number of pupils" for the group was 1,600. The Black Rock School District had 1,400 pupils. "Number of principals" for the seven school districts ranged from two to 10. The average was four principals per district, the same for the Black Rock School District. "District population" for seven school districts ranged from 4,000 to 20,000, with an average population of 9,600 patrons. The Black Rock School District had 8,000 students.

Hours worked per week were very similar for the seven superintendents. The hours varied by the time of year with fewer during the summer. Hours worked per week represented for Philip Derts was based on testimony that in his last year he avoided being around the school district in an attempt to avoid negative situations. Chris Waters recalled Philip taking Friday afternoons off. "I remember one day he told me he had to go to Center Town and buy a bird for his daughter."

The category "major stressful events" represented a rich mix of experiences by the seven superintendents. Problems around OBE were encountered by Superintendents A, B, and Derts. Superintendents C and F experienced stressful controversies surrounding human growth and development and multi-age grouping, respectively. Both issues were closely linked to OBE by opponents. Events for Superintendents A, B, C, E, F, and G included stress produced by lawsuits, two of which reached the State Supreme Court. Derts was not exposed to a lawsuit.

The category "words associated with events" conveys the intensity of the emotional impact on the superintendent from "major stressful events." The comments are based on reflections that were made by seven superintendents who lived through their stressful experiences. The comments of Philip Derts, "Being held hostage by OBE" and "My mind is shutting down" may reflect why he did not.

The category "reflections on the superintendency" provides statements that portray the reality of the superintendency for seven superintendents. They are presented as part of the day-to-day reality of serving as a school superintendent. Derts' reflections indicate his dilemma as the Black Rock superintendent. Driving a truck would allow him to escape the stressful situation, but then he would be letting down the school and its people.

#### **Derts and Gmelch's stress model**

An analysis using Gmelch's theoretical stress model was compared and contrasted with the chronological narrative outcome of the case study of Philip Derts. It will allow, as Maslach (1978) suggested, examining a "bad" situation in which good people like Philip Derts attempted to function. The data can be used to explain, predict, and interpret what was going on, as Huberman (1994) recommended.

Stage One illustrated in Figure 3 (see Chapter II) is a set of demands or stressors placed on the individual. This theoretical framework includes the following dimensions: 1) role-based stress perceived from Derts' role-set interactions and beliefs or attitudes about his role in the schools. Derts felt that only he could do the job and related that feeling to Dr. Book. He believed as superintendent that OBE would be doing "what's right for kids." This caused him a moral predicament when his strong Christian beliefs were questioned by people from his own church. 2) Task-based stress arose from the performance of day-to-day administrative activities, from

telephone and staff interruptions, meetings, writing memos and reports, to participating in school activities outside of the normal working hours. Derts had many hours of his time consumed by a group of home-schoolers. The time that was used in meeting with them took away time that was needed to get the rest of his tasks completed. School board member Kent Duffy witnessed how this group would occupy other chunks of time. It was common for the anti-OBE home-schoolers to use two to three hours of Derts' time in a meeting, and there were many meetings.

Derts also curtailed his working day as the stress became greater. This action would further reduce the amount of time he had available to do the day-to-day duties of a school superintendent.

3) Boundary-spanning stress, emanating from external conditions, such as negotiations and gaining public support for school budgets affected the Black Rock superintendent. The trouble with the teachers' contracts with the state legislature reducing funding was certainly beyond Derts' control. The stress was compounded when surrounding superintendents shared their methods to control for this situation by not signing off on contracts and sending out reduction of force notifications. The upcoming tax levy issue also put boundary-spanning stress on Derts. The stress was compounded for him as the OBE controversy threatened to spill over into the needed tax levy issue. 4) Conflict-mediating stress arose from Derts' handling conflicts within the school such as trying to resolve differences between and among personnel, resolving parent and school conflicts, and handling student discipline. Derts was unable to mediate the OBE controversy. The anti-OBE people were never satisfied by his actions, and his staff, as in the case of the health cards, did not want to give in to pressure. This also can be seen in the willingness of Chris Waters, project director, to confront the anti-OBE people. In one instance, Derts forced Chris Waters to apologize to the school board over one editorial response to the anti-OBE movement carried in *The State Times*.



Between each stage of the stress cycle are filters. Derts' personality and predisposition could have acted as moderating filters, but he lacked these filters to cope with the stressors. To compound matters, these filters affect the influence of and interaction between each of the four stages of the model: 1) Derts was relatively inexperienced as a superintendent. He also had no central office experience outside the Black Rock School District; 2) Derts' family background included growing up with an alcoholic father with distant relationships with other family members; 3) Derts' conservative Christian beliefs which obstructed compromises served as a deterrent to reducing his stress rather than filtering it; and 4) Derts had a very reserved personality which heightened his social isolation, limited his ability to verbally respond to the stressful issues, and served to make him more dependent on his church which contained anti-OBE people who were a source of conflict.

Stage Two involves Perceptions and Interpretations of Stressors by Philip Derts. In this stage, Derts could not respond to the demands and the stress increased. This may sometimes be the case with Type A personalities. The harmful effects of a Type A personality, including the beginning of physical ailments, as with the other consequences of stress can be highly dependent on the individual variables. The defense's expert unsuccessfully tried to portray Derts as "having an obsessive-compulsive personality disorder," and it was not accepted in the hearings that Philip Derts could be accurately described as a Type A personality.

Stage Three, Response to Perceived Stressor, presented choices to Derts. Derts perceived the stressors to be harmful, threatening, and demanding. Stress-coping strategies can counteract the stressor in a positive manner and the individual does not progress to Stage Four, but returns to a lower stage of stress. Since Derts was unable to cope with the stressors, he then moved into the fourth stage, Consequences of Responses.

Stage Four of the cycle contains a return to health if the negative consequences of stress can be overcome by the individual; then the individual loops back to lower stages of the model.

However, the coping behaviors failed and Philip Derts experienced the profound consequence of stress, burnout. With his perception that his "mind (was) shutting down" and panic attacks, emotional exhaustion was evident. Maslach (1998) stated that exhaustion is the most widely reported and analyzed effect of stress: "Exhaustion is the central quality of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome" (p. 77).

Derts experienced depersonalization, which is linked to feelings of lost identity and lost meaningfulness. Low personal accomplishment is a dimension of burnout demonstrated by Derts as he felt disappointed with his accomplishments as a superintendent. Dr. Book reported that Derts felt as if he were a failure and believed that his actions no longer made a difference in resolving the OBE question in the Black Rock School District. Informants speculated that Philip began to feel that the school district and his family would be better off without him.

Thus, Philip Derts was unable to loop back to lower stages in the stress cycle. Burnout is not a temporary condition that seemingly goes away when the stress is removed, like a Band-aid only covers a grievous wound. The real damage, both physically and psychologically, had been experienced by Derts. Taking a few days away from the office was ineffective treatment for his condition. Derts was so deep into the burnout stage, the Black Rock School Board action to abandon the OBE efforts was inconsequential to Derts' mental state. The finding of a State District Court jury revealed the severity of Derts' mental condition.

**Major Depressive Disorder.** The American Psychiatric Association publishes *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fourth Edition DSM-IV* (1994). "It is used by psychiatrists, other physicians, psychologists, social workers, nurses, occupational and

rehabilitation therapists, counselors, and other health and mental health professionals" (p. xv).

Expert testimony regarding Philip Derts' depression came to light in a court action by Ruth Derts against Dr. Book.

As with the workers' compensation claim against the Black Rock School District and its insurer, the plaintiff had to make a direct connection between Derts' depression and his suicide. This could be done by establishing that Derts suffered from Major Depressive Disorder. The *DSM-IV* states, "Up to 15% of individuals with severe Major Depressive Disorder die by suicide. Epidemiological evidence also suggests that there is a fourfold increase in death rates in individuals with Major Depressive Disorder who are over age 55 years" (p. 340). Derts was nearing this age.

The State District Court of records in *Derts v. Book* contains an internationally renown suicide expert's opinion. Using the *DSM-IV* as a basis, he outlined the diagnostic features of a person suffering from Major Depressive Disorder: 1) the depressed mood lasts more than two weeks and that's a depressed mood most of the time; 2) a marked, diminished interest in usual activities or a loss of pleasure in usual activities; 3) substantial weight loss; 4) substantial insomnia; 5) agitation or retardation [immobilized]; 6) fatigue or exhaustion; 7) feeling of worthlessness or guilt; 8) diminished ability to think or concentrate or focus the mind; and 9) recurrent thoughts of death and thoughts of suicide. According to the expert's testimony, Philip Derts met all the *DSM-IV* criteria for Major Depressive Disorder.

The judge instructed the jury that Dr. Book could be negligent in one or more of the following ways:

- 1) Failure to properly diagnose, care for and treat Philip Derts; 2) failure to hospitalize Philip Derts; 3) failure to inform Ruth Derts of her husband's risk of suicide and steps Dr. Book should take in light of that risk; 4) not providing for

definite and certain consultation and care during Dr. Book's vacation; 5) failing to protect Philip Derts from suicide; 6) failing to inform Philip and Ruth Derts of the seriousness and nature of his condition; and 7) failing to involve Ruth Derts in Dr. Book's assessment and management of Philip Derts.

The judge also instructed the jury that in order to find against the defendants, the plaintiffs had to establish the following:

- 1) The defendant was negligent in one or more of the ways charged by plaintiffs;
- 2) the negligence was a proximate cause of Derts' injury or damage; and 3) plaintiffs sustained damage and the extent thereof.

The jury revealed their discernment of the severity of Derts' mental condition. In the judgment, they awarded \$3.4 million to Ruth and her children in a medical malpractice suit against Dr. Book and her employer. The judgment was later settled out of court for an estimated \$2 million.

#### **Stress-standard of Philip Derts**

An analysis of workers' compensation law was applied to the interpretation of the case of Philip Derts. As suggested by Creswell (1994), Table 4 was developed to compare and contrast the data collected in this case study with the established legal standards discussed in the literature review.

There are three major components of this stress-standard. The components are the following: 1) the stress must be objectively observable; 2) the stress must be unusual in magnitude; and 3) the mental stress must be extraordinary compared to the everyday pressures experienced by another person in the same position, in this case, the seven superintendents (see Table 3).

Table 4. Stress-standard of Philip Derts

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Observable job-related stress	Weight loss, lack of sleep, feelings of despair and worthlessness, sense of losing control, loss of appetite, social withdrawal, and indecision
Unusual stress	Teachers' contracts and OBE controversy
Extraordinary stress beyond the seven superintendents	Attacks on his strongly-held religious beliefs, concerns about OBE affecting tax levy, failure as a superintendent to resolve OBE controversy, and refused hospitalization for depression

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#### **Administrative hearings and court findings**

A hearing was held to decide the question of workers' compensation. The chief deputy state industrial commissioner decided that Philip had experienced stresses of a greater magnitude than the day-to-day stresses experienced by other school superintendents. The commissioner ruled in an arbitration decision:

It was found that Philip's death was the result of an injury arising out of and in the course of his employment as a school superintendent at the Black Rock School District. Given such a finding, his widow is entitled to workers' compensation benefits as a matter of law.

The Black Rock School District and its insurance carrier appealed the State Industrial Commission's ruling. In an appeal decision, the State Industrial Commission affirmed the decision. The commissioner's conclusion stated:

The evidence in this case shows that Philip's mental condition arose out of and in the course of his employment.... There is a chain of causation directly linking Philip's mental condition to his loss of judgment causing his suicide.

The school district and its insurance carrier appealed next to the State District Court. The State District Court judge ruled:

A reasonable person could conclude that the work-related depression from which Philip was suffering was so severe that he had lost his ability to make rational or normal judgments and that this deranged mental state caused his suicide...he gradually became so mentally deranged that suicide seemed the only way to escape from his feelings of despair and worthlessness.

The State District Court ruled against the Black Rock School District and its carrier, and the final decision of the chief deputy industrial commissioner was affirmed. They appealed this ruling to the State Supreme Court but to no avail. The high court issued its opinion which stated: "In the present case we believe there is substantial evidence in the record to support the industrial commissioner's finding under the *Dunlavy*<sup>8</sup> test. Therefore, we affirm the district court on that issue."

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<sup>8</sup>The *Dunlavy* test stated that legal causation exists if stresses and tension, when viewed objectively and not as the employee perceives them, were of greater magnitude than the day-to-day mental stresses workers employed in similar jobs experience routinely.

## **CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given that the purpose of this investigation is to increase the understanding of the dynamics of administrative negative stress on a school superintendent, this chapter presents a summary of the study, a discussion of conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for further research.

### **Summary**

This case study focused on Philip Derts, a superintendent supporting Outcome Based Education in the Black Rock School District during the early 1990s, and the challenges he encountered through community opposition to OBE. The following components were developed in this study: 1) chronological narrative and a timeline of events in this case; 2) matrix of the selected superintendents' responses to stress compared and contrasted to the case superintendent's responses; 3) application of Gmelch's administrative stress model to this case; and 4) analysis of a stress-standard relative to this case study.

A qualitative narrative emerged from the data analysis of this case study. This narrative reported the stressful experiences of Philip Derts and the Black Rock School District. In addition, it included a discussion of the court findings from the State Industrial Commission, State District Court, and State Supreme Court after his death. The courts' findings affirmed that Philip Derts' death was caused by workplace stress as a superintendent, and his widow was entitled to workers' compensation benefits. Thus, these court rulings refute rival theories of causation of the suicide based on Derts' personal trauma.

A timeline of major events reported the four years of Derts' superintendency. The timeline served as a chronological summary of the events described in the narrative of this case study. The events displayed for Derts' last two months of life clearly revealed his rapid mental decline leading to his suicide.

To increase the understanding of the complexity of stress experienced by Derts, data were gathered from comparable school superintendents' depositions. The superintendents were deposed, in the course of litigation, to determine the stresses experienced by them. The first subsection of the report displayed data in a matrix consisting of the analysis of stressors of comparable superintendents and the selected superintendent (see Table 2). This information was displayed, compared, and contrasted with those of Derts in the superintendents' matrix. To increase the understanding of the dynamics of administrative negative stress for the reader, the matrix displayed data in the following categories: demographic information, hours worked, major stressful events, and words used for historical events and reflections on the superintendency. An analysis provided insights into what stressful events impacted the position of the school superintendent. Derts' experience was similar to those of seven comparable superintendents, but his reactions to these similar experiences proved far more extreme. A stark contrast is visible in the matrix. The comparative group had an average of over 17 years experience as a superintendent while Derts accumulated only four years, and two of those were extremely stressful.

This case study investigated causal relationships concerning the negative effects of stress on the Black Rock school superintendent. This activity blended the singular historical reality with a theoretical model (see Figure 3). Data generated from the narrative were fitted into the five stages and stress moderating filters of Gmelch's administrative stress model. The analysis compared and contrasted Gmelch's theoretical stress model with the chronological narrative outcome of the case



study. Utilizing Gmelch's theoretical framework, an explanation of Derts' inability to cope with the encountered stressors was developed. These findings indicated that Philip Derts was unable to cycle back to lower stages of stress and maintain his health. The physiological and psychological damage prevented this cycling and resulted in a case of fatal burnout. This was consistent with the evidence of Major Depressive Disorder discussed in *Derts v. Book*.

Incorporated into this study was the aspect of workers' compensation law and rulings (see Table 4). Interpretations of the case narrative were compared and contrasted with the established legal standards discussed in the literature review. The stress-standard of Philip Derts displayed all of the three major categories of workplace stress: observable job-related stress; unusual stress; and extraordinary stress beyond the seven superintendents. All three major components required by established legal standards for qualifying for workers' compensation benefits were present in Derts' experiences.

### **Analysis of Data**

This summary restates the four research questions posed in Chapter I and summarizes their answers as uncovered in this investigation.

**Research Question 1:** What was the role of pro- and anti-Outcome Based Education (OBE) forces during the early 1990s present on the national, state, and in the selected community level?

In the leadership role as superintendent, Philip Derts was the main proponent of OBE. He was first exposed to OBE proponents during his administrative course work. In support of OBE, the Department of Education encouraged school districts including Black Rock to define educational outcomes for their communities. However, the state abandoned its role in Black Rock

when Dr. Miller, the director of the Department of Education, withdrew his department's support for OBE initiative.

Black Rock teachers heard inservice speakers from the area educational agency and even national figures including Dr. Willard Daggett, director of the International Center for Leadership in Education. In addition, readers of *The Black Rock Eagle* were exposed to pro-OBE articles from Daggett and quotations by William Spady, an educator identified in the literature review as the premier proponent of OBE.

Proponents of OBE existed within the leadership structure of the Black Rock School District. Chris Waters, the curriculum coordinator, was instructed to actively pursue OBE. Supporting this lead, about 75 percent of the faculty wanted to implement an OBE program at the Black Rock School District. In the area of governance, there was no evidence that any of the board members were stealth candidates. The Black Rock school board supported OBE until they followed Derts' recommendation to drop it.

The anti-OBE forces in Black Rock were found not to be that numerous, but they did pursue an active role in school and community affairs. Two local factions were at work in the community. One group was composed of critics from Derts' Baptist church. The other group was led by Betsy Morgan and was composed of about five vocal home-schooling parents.

From the content of editorials (one tied directly to Focus on the Family) in *The Black Rock Eagle* and the programming carried by the local 24-hour-a-day Christian radio station, both factions had some type of communication with national anti-OBE organizations. A state-level anti-OBE activist and editor of *The Report*, speaking against OBE in the Black Rock community, indicates a connection on the state level. Finally, the state Republican platform influenced the local political climate with its political disapproval of Dr. Miller and many of his department's educational initiatives (statements contained in the 3. Education series of planks).

**Research Question 2:** What kind of negative stress was produced by the combination of pro- and anti-OBE forces on this case study's superintendent trying to bring about change?

The OBE controversy caused unusual stress for the superintendent of Black Rock. *The Black Rock Eagle* carried four anti-OBE editorials in five months, the circulation of Luksik's video, the lengthy office visits to Derts by Betsy Morgan and other home-schoolers, the school board OBE meeting, the outside speaker, disparaging personal letters, and reproachful conversations contributed to Derts' ultimate burnout. This stress was compounded by Derts' concerns that the OBE controversy would cause voter disapproval of the much needed tax levy. The resulting relationship of the tax levy connected with OBE and Derts' inability to resolve the OBE controversy meant that any changes proposed by the Black Rock School District increased the possibilities of political, social, and religious backlashes in his mind.

This negative anticipatory set, based more on his perceptions rather than grounded in what was actually occurring, would have a multiplier effect on Derts' stress levels. Consequently, in addition to outside factors, Derts struggled with what should have been relatively unremarkable issues for most superintendents: block scheduling, drug free activities, and ministerial association meetings. Events surrounding these mundane issues were viewed by Derts as controversial and extremely stressful.

Derts suffered a greater magnitude of negative stress due to his internal conflict between his religious beliefs and educational beliefs. Derts had a dilemma in supporting OBE in Black Rock and what he educationally believed was in the best interests of kids. Derts also felt the need not to let the district's teachers down by dropping OBE. Conversely, parts of OBE conflicted with his fundamentalist Christian beliefs. This conflict was compounded by the reality that his social and political power base resided in his church. They had ensured that he would ascend to the

superintendency of Black Rock. This political reality would explain the increase of stress experienced by Derts when he was encountered by OBE critics within his church.

**Research Question 3:** What would be the consequences of negative stress on the mental and physical well-being of this case study's superintendent?

The stressful environment of being superintendent of Black Rock during the early 1990s devastated Derts. The effects included weight loss, lack of sleep, feelings of despair and worthlessness, sense of losing control, loss of appetite, social withdrawal, indecision, and ultimately, suicide. Derts' deterioration in his last two months was so accelerated that it appears that he just shattered.

**Research Question 4:** Does the selected superintendent's responses to negative stress fit the responses predicted by Gmelch's administrative stress model?

Philip Derts progressed rapidly through the four stages of stress. Stage Four of the cycle contains a return to health if the negative consequences of stress can be overcome by the individual; then the individual loops back to lower stages of the model.

Derts experienced burnout, the profound consequence of stress, and was unable to cope. The real damage, both physically and psychologically, had been experienced by Derts in this fourth stage. Resulting from his severe depression caused by the stress on the job, Derts took his own life.

### **Conclusions**

Philip Derts was a school superintendent who committed suicide. Ruth, his widow, filed a workers' compensation claim against the Black Rock School District and its insurance carrier.

The case was based on the contention that the extreme stress her husband suffered, due mainly to anti-OBE efforts in the community, caused him to become depressed and then suicidal. Ruth's lawyers proved on four different legal levels ending at the State Supreme Court that he sustained a mental/mental injury on the job as the Black Rock superintendent. In addition, her legal team also won a \$2 million malpractice suit from Dr. Book, Philip's treating psychiatrist.

This case study's narrative and a timeline revealed the events that led up to his demise. The stress encountered by the OBE controversy did lead to his death but not because of its intensity. Philip Derts had already shown signs of extreme mental stress in the previous year. The teacher contract issue caused by the cut in state funding had exacted a toll on him. Derts was a changed man, but this was observed only by the few people working closely with him. They were not surprised when, in his last two months, as others were thinking the OBE controversy was a non-issue in Black Rock, Philip Derts literally self-destructed.

Derts' lack of experience, reserved nature, management style, image as the hierarchical leader, and his ties to his church hampered him in his ability to deal with the issues. The superintendent's matrix displayed his limited experience contrasted to other comparable superintendents. His socially reserved nature isolated him further from the mainstream and limited his ability to mount effective political responses. Derts' management style did not allow him to utilize what this researcher believes was a remarkable administrative team made up of experienced, competent, and strong leaders. He allowed himself to become isolated at the top of the system and was unable to ask for help until it was too late. Derts' power base resided with his church. When he needed to draw on this power source to weather the anti-OBE storm, as other superintendents had done, he didn't find a source of support in his church. Instead, he received criticism.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations experienced by the researcher after the investigation was initiated. They were:

1. This study contains information derived from depositions. According to *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, "Depositions are a discovery tool...used to assemble the testimonial and documentary evidence in a case before trial" (Lewis, 1998, Vol. 4, p. 67). *West's* illustrates one limitation of depositions in that "Questions that could not be asked of a witness in court because of doubts about their relevance or concerns about hearsay are usually allowed in the deposition setting, because they might reasonably lead to admissible statements or evidence" (Vol. 4, p. 68). In addition, the memories of people giving depositions, which were collected two years after the events, may have been altered by time and other events.
2. Along with depositions, data were collected from court testimony. Testimonies were recorded by a court reporter and do not include informants' off-the-record statements, voice inflections, facial expressions, or conversations occurring when another person is speaking. These records were truncated by the restriction of informants only answering questions solicited by the examining attorneys.
3. Unlike data collected from interviews, information contained in depositions and testimonies was not collected to achieve the goals of the study. The researcher was unable to ask follow-up questions and was limited to those questions used by the attorneys.
4. Testimony in this case was given four years after the fact. As with depositions, the witnesses' memories may have been altered by time and other events.

5. Data collected from interviews had limitations. More than five years have intervened since most of the events occurred in this study. Participants' memories were not always complete due to the passage of time. Memories were also limited because many of the events were deemed insignificant or commonplace at the time of their occurrence and blended in unremarkable routine.
6. As foreseen in the delimitations, some subjects were unwilling to be interviewed due to a desire not to relive the past. One of these subjects expressed reservations to participate because of the pending litigation.
7. The interview transcripts do not contain all the information gathered from informants. The nature of the topic, experience with a contentious litigation process, and concerns about possible legal repercussions created a reserved attitude among the study's informants. Some sensitive reflections were requested to remain off-the-record.
8. Pseudonyms were used, dates were represented in general terms, and the bibliography section did not cite all the sources used to avoid the loss of confidentiality. These characteristics make it difficult for another researcher to duplicate this study or to access many of the sources.

### **Discussion**

This study put qualitative research into practice and achieved the objectives of this case study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommended qualitative research to study the complex social interactions. Stake (1988) maintains that educational problems can be best explained by the use of a case study. This case study examined mainly the complex situation Philip Derts found himself in Black Rock and answered what Yin (1989) described as the "how" and "why." The analysis was

based on the narrative and timeline that provided the "hows" while the superintendents' matrix, workers' compensation standard, and Gmelch's model were used to explain the "whys."

The research design outlined in Chapter III provides a modern case study methodology for future researchers to follow or modify. In addition, this case utilized sources that usually remain outside educational research. Court documents and workers' compensation case law proved a rich source for composing interesting thick descriptions recommended by Geertz (1973).

Yin (1994) recommended the use of a narrative and timeline to establish causal sequences. This study developed a chronological narrative and timeline to describe the unfolding of events. As explained in Chapter III, the role of the researcher acts like the instrument, or as described by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), as one having personal involvement and empathic understanding. That is why a description of the researcher is located in this study. Another reader may arrive at different conclusions than this researcher. The narrative and timeline can basically stand alone and allow different readers to come to their own conclusions.

The researcher envisioned what would be discovered before starting the data collection. The researcher expected to find a complete system of OBE in place at Black Rock given the efforts of both pro- and anti-OBE forces. This was not the case. OBE never had gotten off the ground in the Black Rock School District. It had been discussed in a 47-person OBE committee and yet, two years later, it was nowhere close to implementation when Superintendent Derts recommended the Black Rock school board drop the effort. This innovation, OBE, that caused so much pain and anguish to Derts and the Black Rock School District, never did evolve beyond the planning level.

Perhaps, the researcher reasoned, there existed in Black Rock a substantial force fighting OBE created to mirror the vision of Robert Simonds or Ralph Reed. The researcher envisioned mobs of Christian fundamentalists conducting torchlight parades in the streets of Black Rock. As it turned out, there were only about five people in the home-school faction. They were sincere



and persistent in their opposition to OBE because of the fear of what it might mean for the children of the district. They did have information that stemmed from connections to state organization, as indicated by their editorials and the invitation of an anti-OBE speaker. The number in the church faction was never identified by Derts, and informants speculate that their number was also small. A number of their names surfaced as steering committee members that started the Christian radio station. Since this station carried national programming, anti-OBE programs would be aired. Even the Luksik video from Pennsylvania was anticlimactic for the researcher. It consisted of a taped lecture based on government forms with a planted audience who pretended to take notes as the speaker droned on.

It appears the description of the anti-OBE forces in Black Rock as small but pesky was extremely accurate. Even though the small group led by Betsy Morgan was described as "regulars" at the board meetings, Black Rock school board minutes for Derts' last year record them as attending only three meetings. The researcher expected to uncover a number of stealth candidates on the Black Rock school board. This study did not locate any.

Stress is a significant topic of research in our modern society. More than 100,000 books, magazines, and journal articles have been written about stress (Gmelch, 1993). The research on stress in schools has examined the stages of stress from its nature, types and sources, responses, and the consequences of it (Gmelch, 1991). Larry Cuban states, "Stress is as natural to the superintendency as to any executive's job" (Goldstein, 1992, p. 12). Cuban also pointed out that "the superintendent can't win" (p. 14).

Glass (1992), in his American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) national study of 1,710 superintendents, revealed a general view that the superintendency was a moderately (41.7%) to considerably stressful occupation (7.8%). This case study examines the experience of only one superintendent, but it is an in-depth exploration. The details that emerged in this study

were incorporated into the existing knowledge and theories about administrative stress reflected the stages and filters of Gmelch's stress model. The findings of this case study aligned with those predicted in the model.

One important aspect of Gmelch's work was in the area of perceived stress by the individual. Derts moved rapidly through the stages of Gmelch's model, because his perceived stress or even the anticipation of a stressful situation multiplied the effects of the real stress.

By the inclusion of job stress and workers' compensation case law, the findings of this case study were made more rigorous. The workers' compensation standard only takes into account the occurrence of job stressors. Even by this higher standard, the rulings of the courts leave little doubt in the researcher's mind as to the presence of extreme stress for the Black Rock superintendent.

Finally, insights into our educational culture emerged from this study. School people in Black Rock still demonstrate strong emotions over Derts' suicide. More than blame, the researcher believes they grieve the loss of the normalcy in their educational lives. Memories of the suicide of their superintendent will haunt their reflections on their careers and school district forever.

### **Recommendations for Practitioners**

This study may serve as a cautionary tale. With upcoming mass retirements in the superintendency, issues concerning new superintendents become crucial. Candidates for a superintendency should carefully consider the match between their individual personal characteristics and the demands of the modern superintendency. Based on findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered to school boards, administrators, and professors of educational administration:

1. **Administrative preparation programs should include stress management to assist individuals in coping in situations which are expected to be part of the superintendency. Training for future superintendents should include training in simulated high-stress situations conducted under realistic conditions.**
2. **Innovations should be researched carefully before being fully endorsed for statewide implementation. The use of pilot programs would be prudent. The knowledge gained from doing a number of pilot studies would assist school leaders in anticipating negative ramifications for the school districts, communities, and individuals.**
3. **The philosophical stance in the field of administrative leadership which supports the notion that any change must be good should be reconsidered. New superintendents, eager to establish a name for themselves, may be more susceptible to rushing into endorsing new programs without considering the myriad of consequences for their actions.**
4. **Recruiters need to effectively assess and match the skills, abilities, experiences, and dispositions of superintendent candidates with the demands of open positions. Candidates predicted to be at risk as superintendents should be redirected to other educational endeavors where they can productively contribute to the profession.**
5. **This study demonstrates an urgent need for interventions with struggling superintendents. Professionals, especially those working closely with the superintendent, should be provided training in recognizing the signs of dangerous stress, depression, and burnout. Because of their crucial supporting role, superintendents' spouses should be included in this training.**
6. **A support system using experienced mentors needs to be in place for professionals to consult and to gain assistance for the people agonizing at the top levels of a school**

system. Professional organizations must support these networks for superintendents.

The social needs of isolated superintendents should be met by the formation of non-job-related activities including literature, discussion groups, and social functions.

7. Professional organizations should actively provide superintendents with information on career possibilities beyond the position of superintendent through web sites and seminars. Access to this information would provide alternatives to the superintendency and provide ways for administrators to make greater use of their talents.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings of this study, these recommendations are identified as areas for future research:

1. Case studies of superintendents who exit the field of education early because of the job stress should be conducted. Researchers should look for common traits that assist in creating a high-risk profile screening instrument. Careful attention should be paid to candidates lacking the stress moderating filters outlined in the Gmelch model.
2. Qualitative studies of school leaders should assist in developing better methodologies and providing deeper insights into the human condition of our school leaders. More studies focusing on the role of superintendents' spouses are crucial to this research.
3. Studies of successful, effective coping strategies should be conducted. The knowledge gained should be used in the field to assist superintendents to cope in their unique positions. Burnout and suicide prevention for top-level administrators are judicious goals.
4. The impact of stress-related workers' compensation claims by school administrators with mental/mental injuries should be thoroughly researched. School districts need to

consider the increased legal liability. Results should be used to anticipate the future need for better insurance coverage and provide the financial justification for improved stress management resources.

5. The field of educational leadership needs to conduct an honest dialogue about the stress of the superintendency. As illustrated by the superintendents' matrix, a wealth of information exists about the position. Findings should be used to guide educators into superintendencies or into different educational roles. Improved understanding of the effects of stress and its management will lead to a greater retention of our nation's superintendents. Experienced leaders are valuable assets to our nation's schools. The study of successful stress management constitutes a wise educational investment.

**APPENDIX A. RELIGIOUS RIGHT ORGANIZATIONS**

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## Who's Who on the Religious Right?

- American Family Association
- Christian Coalition
- Citizens for Excellence in Education / National Association of Christian Educators
- Concerned Women for America
- Eagle Forum
- Family Research Council
- Focus on the Family
- Free Congress Foundation
- National Right to Life Committee
- Operation Rescue National
- Traditional Values Coalition

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### American Family Association

P.O. Box 2440  
 Tupelo, MS 38803  
 (601) 844-5036  
 Internet address: [www.afa.net](http://www.afa.net)

**Formerly:** National Federation for Decency  
**President:** Rev. Donald Wildmon  
**Date of founding:** 1977  
**Place of founding:** Tupelo, MS

**Activities:** The American Family Association's (AFA) activities include

[http://www.pfm.org/about/right\\_bg\\_group.shtml](http://www.pfm.org/about/right_bg_group.shtml)

boycotting sponsors of TV shows with "excessive" sex and violence. AFA also objects to TV programs which it thinks display an anti-Christian bias. Among its hundreds of targets over the years are "Cheers," "The Johnny Carson Show," "Saturday Night Live," "Roseanne," "Nightline" and "NYPD Blue." In 1994, the AFA spent some \$3 million on a newspaper, radio and direct mail campaign discouraging advertisers from airing commercials during "NYPD Blue." In addition to targeting network television, AFA actively campaigns against public television. The group has called for the shutdown of PBS. As a result of the AFA's campaign, many state legislatures reduced funding for public broadcasting.

The group also spearheaded the attack on the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), using direct mail and extensive print advertising to distort the NEA's record of sponsorship of the arts. The AFA also involves itself in public school censorship. AFA filed lawsuits attempting to ban the curriculum, "Impressions," from public school classrooms on the grounds that it "promotes the religion of witchcraft." The AFA Law Center is staffed by six full-time attorneys with a network of more than 400 affiliate lawyers. AFA's Washington D.C. Office of Governmental Affairs provides information on proposed federal legislation and monitors the activities of Congress, the White House, and the federal agencies.

Most recently, the AFA has been vigorously promoting a boycott against the Disney corporation and its subsidiaries. The AFA is protesting Disney's extension of company benefits to same-sex partners of gay and lesbian employees. It also objects to various films and television shows produced by Disney subsidiaries, claiming they support violence, anti-Christian themes, incest, graphic sex, hard drug use, profanity and obscenity.

Along with several other Religious Right groups, the AFA is currently participating in a campaign against American Airlines. The AFA signed onto a letter condemning the airline for its gay-friendly policies. In addition, the group has called on the airlines to stop its "endorsement of a radical movement that seeks to use government and corporate power to impose obligatory acceptance of homosexuality on all of society."

**Membership:** AFA claims over 500,000 members.



**State chapters:** 450 local affiliates across the country. The Sacramento Union reported that the California AFA chapter has nearly 300,000 active supporters.

**Publication:** *AFA Journal* (published monthly), with a circulation of nearly 400,000.

**Radio:** Produces the radio show, "AFA Report," a 30-minute feature available on about 1,200 local radio stations. AFA also has a broadcast ministry, American Family Radio, with over 100 radio stations in 24 states across the country.

**Finances:** AFA is a 501(c)(3). Total revenue for 1998 was \$8.9 million.

**Staff:** About 120 employees and four full-time lawyers.

**Quotes from Don Wildmon:** "It's not only a cultural civil war, it's a fight over the very existence of society as we've known it." (Memphis, *TN Commercial-Appeal*, 8/5/90)

"What we are up against is not dirty words and dirty pictures. It is a philosophy of life which seeks to remove the influence of Christians and Christianity from our society." (*New York Times*, 9/2/90)

On President Bill Clinton and gays: "He [Bill Clinton] made a covenant with the homosexuals -- with the radical homosexuals. He has catered to them. He has solicited their support. He has said to them, 'if you give me your support, if you give me the vote, if you give me the money, I will give you what you want. I will put -- from the highest office in this country -- I will put the stamp of approval on your actions.'" (National Affairs Briefing, 8/92)

"Christianity and politics not only do mix, but for democracy as we have known it to survive, they must mix." (*Miami Herald*, 11/16/93)

3/98

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### Christian Coalition

[http://www.phw.org/usa/ncpc/dg\\_groupd.htm](http://www.phw.org/usa/ncpc/dg_groupd.htm)

P.O. Box 1990  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
(804) 424-2630  
Internet address: [www.cc.org](http://www.cc.org)

**Founder:** Pat Robertson  
**President:** Pat Robertson  
**Executive Director:** Randy Tate  
**Date of founding:** 1989

**Activities:** The Christian Coalition's central goals are two: to take working control of the Republican party by working from the grassroots up; and electing "Christian candidates" to public office. The group has had considerable success in both areas, claiming control at several state Republican central committees and winning election to public office for Christian Coalition members and endorsees.

The Christian Coalition distributed ~33 million voter guides for 1994 general election. For the 1996 election, the group mailed 45 million voting guides and made personal contact with 10 million voters using phone banks.

The group has also focused on other issues such as defunding the National Endowment for the Arts, campaigning against gay rights and opposing equal rights for women, including reproductive freedom. In the fall of 1995 the Christian Coalition launched the Catholic Alliance in an attempt to boost its membership among pro-family Catholics. However, the Alliance met with limited success and has now severed its ties with the Christian Coalition and is an independent group.

The coalition has recently undergone a change in leadership with the departure of Executive Director Ralph Reed in September of 1997. It has also suffered a severe decline in donations, from \$26.5 million in 1996 to \$17 million in 1997. As a result of this steep loss in revenue, the group has reorganized by cutting staff and dropping its minority outreach program, the Samaritan Project. Since Reed's exit, the organization's strategy of working closely with the Republican Party has changed. Its new strategy, called Families 2000, will be to reach out to churchgoers and focus on such social issues as abortion, gay rights, pornography, and gambling. The new plan also calls for recruiting 100,000 church liaisons by November 2000. The coalition continues to push for legislative measures designed to promote

inner-city projects including educational vouchers. The group also supports education savings accounts, known as "education IRAs," to pay for private school tuition and home schooling.

**Membership:** The coalition claims 1.9 million members. However, the actual number of supporters may be only 300,000-400,000 members, which is based on the more reliable measure of how many households received the Christian American during the year.

**State chapters:** 2,000 across the United States.

**Publications:** *Christian American* (has now ceased publication) and *Religious Rights Watch*.

**TV:** Pat Robertson's "700 Club" has about 7 million viewers every week. The group's hour-long satellite television show, "Christian Coalition Weekly," which was broadcast over America's Voice (formerly known as National Empowerment Television), was recently canceled.

**Finances:** The Christian Coalition is a 501(c)(4) organization, and is therefore, partially tax-exempt; it can lobby, but cannot endorse candidates. Contributions to the group have dropped from a record of \$26.5 million in 1996 to around \$17 million in 1997.

The coalition's tax exempt status is still under review by the IRS. In addition, the group has been sued by the Federal Election Commission. The FEC is arguing that the coalition coordinated political efforts with Republican candidates from 1990 to 1994. Both actions are pending.

**Staff:** 80

**Quotes from Pat Robertson:** "The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians." (Pat Robertson direct mail, Summer 1992)

"We want...as soon as possible to see a majority of the Republican Party in the hands of pro-family Christians by 1996." (*Denver Post*, 10/26/92)

"I believe that during the next couple of years there will be a fierce struggle between the militant leftists, secular humanists, and atheists who have dominated the power centers of American culture for the past 50 years and the Evangelical Christians, pro-family Roman Catholics, and their conservative allies. The radical left will lose its hold, and by the end of this decade control of the major institutions of society will be firmly in the hands of those who share a pro-family, religious, traditional value perspective." (Pat Robertson's Perspective, July - August/1991)

On South Africa: "Again I think 'one man one vote,' just unrestricted democracy would not be wise. There needs to be some kind of protection for the minority which the white people represent now, a minority, and they need and have a right to demand a protection of their rights . . . ." (700 Club, 3/18/92)

Quotes from Ralph Reed: On the coalition's election plan in San Diego, CA: "It's like guerrilla warfare. If you reveal your location, all it does is allow your opponent to improve his artillery bearings. It's better to move quietly, with stealth, under cover of night. You've got two choices: You can wear cammies and shimmy along on your belly, or you can put on a red coat and stand up for everyone to see. It comes down to whether you want to be the British army in the Revolutionary War or the Viet Cong. History tells us which tactic was more effective." (Los Angeles Times, 3/22/92)

On election strategy: "I want to be invisible. I do guerrilla warfare. I paint my face and travel at night. You don't know it's over until you're in a body bag." (Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, 11/9/91)

"We tried to charge Washington when we should have been focusing on the states. The real battles of concern to Christians are in neighborhoods, school boards, city councils and state legislatures." (Washington Post, 3/14/90)

Quote from Donald Hodel: "A group like ours may, in fact, have greater impact if it is not visible. One of the strengths of a grassroots campaign is that it doesn't show up on a radar screen." (Kansas City Star, 1/25/98)

3/98

**Citizens for Excellence in Education / National Association of  
Christian Educators**

P.O. Box 3200  
Costa Mesa, CA 92628  
(714) 251-9333  
Internet address: [www.nace-cee.org](http://www.nace-cee.org)

**President:** Dr. Robert L. Simonds  
**Date of founding:** 1983  
**Place of founding:** Costa Mesa, CA

**Activities:** Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE) is one of the most active groups challenging books, educational materials and curricula in the public schools. CEE has initiated various censorship incidents involving the "Impressions" reading series, drug-abuse prevention programs and self-esteem curricula. CEE is intent upon restoring religion in the public schools. One way the group hopes to accomplish this is to rid schools of textbooks that supposedly teach "secular humanism" and that mention the theory of evolution. In addition, CEE also helps to elect its members to school boards across the country. As of January 1994, CEE claimed to have helped elect 12,625 parents to school boards in only five years. Bob Simonds, president of CEE, has stated that he "want[s] to revert to Christian control of public schools." However, in a recent fundraising letter, Simonds is now telling his members that "Christians must exit the public schools." In order to help people transfer their children to Christian or home schools, Simonds has set up a project called Rescue 2010. The plan's goal is to fill current Christian schools and start a school in every church facility by the year 2010.

**Membership:** 325,000

**State chapters:** CEE claims about 1,700 chapters and 878 Public School Awareness (PSA) church committees. These committees are established in churches in order to influence and bring about change in local public schools.

**Publications:** *Education Newslite* (quarterly newsletter). *Family Building Blocks* (bimonthly newsletter). *How to Elect Christians to Public Office* (1985) is a 65-page booklet instructing Christians on

[http://www.cee.org/news/1997/eq\\_growd.0701](http://www.cee.org/news/1997/eq_growd.0701)

how to win school board seats.

**Radio:** Issues in Education is heard on 100 stations.

**Finances:** \$610,000 annual budget is mainly from individual donors.

**Quotes from Robert Simonds:** "As the church watches from the sidelines, the ungodly elect atheists and homosexuals to school boards and legislatures to enact policies and laws that destroy our Christian children and discriminate against Christian families." (CEE President's Report, 3/91)

On multiculturalism, values clarification and self-esteem: "The Los Angeles riots, showing sickening disregard for the life and property of neighbors, were spawned right in our public school classrooms. We have been teaching multiculturalism instead of Americanism, for ten years now, and indoctrinating our children with values clarification and 'self-esteem.'" (CEE President's Report, 6/92)

"There are 15,700 school districts in America. When we get an active Christian parent's committee in operation in all districts, we can take complete control of all local school boards. This would allow us to determine all local policy: select good textbooks, good curriculum programs, superintendents, and principals. Our time has come!" (CEE direct mail)

"We need strong school board members who know right from wrong. The Bible, being the only true source of right and wrong, should be the guide of board members. Only godly Christians can truly qualify for this critically important position...." (*How to Elect Christians to Public Office*, 1985).

3/98

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#### Concerned Women for America

370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20024  
(202) 488-7000  
Internet address: [www.cwfa.org](http://www.cwfa.org)

[http://www.ohio.org/issues/right/bc\\_group.shtml](http://www.ohio.org/issues/right/bc_group.shtml)

**Founder and Chairman:** Beverly LaHaye  
**President:** Carmen Pate  
**Date of founding:** 1979  
**Place of founding:** San Diego, CA  
**Membership:** CWA claims over 500,000 members.

**Activities:** Concerned Women for America (CWA) is anti-gay, anti-choice and anti-sex education. In addition, CWA opposes funding the National Endowment for the Arts. It has lobbied against the Freedom of Choice Act and gay rights legislation in many states. In the area of education, CWA fights against sex education curricula that is not abstinence based and opposes anti-drug and alcohol abuse programs that emphasize self-esteem. Many challengers to books and curricula in public schools use CWA's materials.

Grassroots activity for most states is headed by a CWA Area Representative and a steering committee. This group monitors state legislation, organizes Prayer/Action chapters and coordinates the "535" program, CWA's grassroots congressional lobbying program.

**State chapters:** 1,200 chapters across the country.

**Publication:** *Family Voice* (published monthly, has 200,000 subscribers) and *Issues at a Glance* (monthly). *Family Watch*, a church communication, reaches 500,000 people in churches across the country.

**Radio:** CWA's daily 30-minute radio show, "Beverly LaHaye Live," reaches an estimated audience of 750,000.

**Finances:** Income was \$11.3 million for 1996.

**Staff:** 25

**Quotes by Beverly LaHaye:** "Yes, religion and politics do mix. America is a nation based on biblical principles. Christian values dominate our government. The test of those values is the Bible. Politicians who do not use the bible to guide their public and private lives do not belong in office." (Ms., 2/87)

**On censorship:** "I am aware that America is and must always be a land

of freedom including freedom of speech. But there is a right time and place for everything." (CWA News, 3/91)

Mrs. LaHaye warned her members that homosexuals "want their depraved 'values' to become our children's values. Homosexuals expect society to embrace their immoral way of life. Worse yet, they are looking for new recruits!" (CWA direct mail, 5/92)

3/98

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### Eagle Forum

Box 618  
Alton, IL 62002  
(618) 462-5415  
Internet address: [www.eagleforum.org](http://www.eagleforum.org)

**President:** Phyllis Schlafly  
**Date of founding:** 1972  
**Place of founding:** Alton, IL  
**Membership:** 80,000 (1996)

**Activities:** The Eagle Forum opposes the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, AIDS education, sex education that is not strictly abstinence-only, self-esteem programs in public schools, funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and federal support for daycare and family leave. Recent activities include the distribution of an Eagle Forum television "documentary" on the United Nations (U.N.). The television report recounts how U.N. treaties and conferences are supposedly undermining American independence and "paving the way for global control." The group also opposes a national educational testing plan and school-to-work legislation. Phyllis Schlafly is an outspoken critic of public education and her materials are frequently cited by local schoolbook censors. Schlafly founded the Republican National Coalition for Life in 1990, and was a driving force behind the Republican party's strict anti-choice platform plank. Eagle Forum also has a political action committee with offices in Washington, DC. It also has chapters in all 50 states.

**Publications:** *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* (monthly with 80,000

[http://www.eagleforum.org/issues/right/eg\\_forum.htm](http://www.eagleforum.org/issues/right/eg_forum.htm)



subscribers). *Education Reporter* (monthly). Mrs. Schlafly also writes a syndicated column which appears in newspapers across the country.

**Radio:** Mrs. Schlafly's radio commentaries are heard on daily on 270 radio stations.

**Television:** Phyllis Schlafly does a weekly commentary on the America's Voice network (formerly known as National Empowerment Television).

**Quotes from Phyllis Schlafly:** On sexual harassment: "If there's no proof, it's all in your mind. We don't want a policeman at every water cooler, you know." (*USA Today*, 9/9/91)

"Nothing about contraception should be taught in schools. There is no question that it will encourage sexual activity." (*New York Times*, 10/17/92)

On the election of President Bill Clinton: "Some people think that pro-family and conservatives do better in adversity than they do in success, and I think there will be a great rallying of the pro-family movement." (*Family News in Focus*, 11/5/92)

"You can't get into negotiations with the feminists because you will lose. They will slit your throat. They have no sense of fair play or compromise." (*National Affairs Briefing*, 8/92)

3/98

### **Family Research Council**

801 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 393-2100  
Internet address: [www.frc.org](http://www.frc.org)

**President:** Gary Bauer  
**Date of founding:** 1981

**Activities:** The Family Research Council (FRC), headed by Gary

[http://www.frc.org/issues/rights/bq\\_grassroots.htm](http://www.frc.org/issues/rights/bq_grassroots.htm)

Bauer, was a division of Focus on the Family from 1988 to 1992. Since the 1994 election, FRC has emerged as a leading conservative think-tank lobbying against reproductive freedom, civil rights for gays, and funding of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Moreover, FRC supports a school prayer amendment and would like to "disestablish" the Department of Education. In recent years, Bauer has gained more media attention and has replaced Ralph Reed (former Christian Coalition executive director) as the spokesman for the Religious Right. Bauer is even flirting with running for president in the year 2000.

**Membership:** 455,000 members.

**Publications:** *Washington Watch* (monthly with a circulation of 400,000) and *Family Policy* (bimonthly). *Ed Facts* (available via fax, e-mail or internet on a weekly basis). *CultureFacts* (available by fax or e-mail). *i.e.* (Ideas & Energy) monthly newsletter provides articles on political, social, and cultural trends for high-school students. Also produces numerous issue papers.

**Radio:** Gary Bauer's "Daily Commentary" (90-second commentary available Monday-Friday on 400 radio stations across the country).

**Finances:** \$14 million budget.

**Staff:** 70

**Quotes from Gary Bauer:** On the decision by Cracker Barrel Restaurants to refuse to hire homosexuals: "I believe in the equality of all races and I do not believe in the equality of all sexual acts." (*Family News in Focus*, 3/4/91)

"I think of Justices Souter, Kennedy, and Justice O'Connor who voted against us on that [*Lee v. Weisman*] decision and on the abortion decision. The thought struck me that these must be the only three people in America who don't understand why they were put on the Supreme Court." (*National Affairs Briefing*, 8/92)

On funding the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA): The NEA "has allowed itself to be used by a small cadre of cultural revolutionaries, militant homosexuals and anti-religious bigots who are intent on attacking the average American's most deeply held beliefs while

sending them the bill." (FRC direct mail, 10/90)

3/98

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### Focus on the Family

P.O. Box 35500  
Colorado Springs, CO 80935  
(719) 531-3400  
Internet address: [www.foff.org](http://www.foff.org)

**President:** Dr. James C. Dobson  
**Date of founding:** 1977

**Activities:** Focus on the Family (FOF) conducts seminars across the country to help evangelical Christians become involved in the political process. Focus on the Family has used its radio show and magazine, *Citizen*, to urge "pro-family" voters to become active in state and local primaries and caucuses. FOF has 34 state affiliates including the Pennsylvania Family Institute, the North Carolina Policy Council and the Rocky Mountain Family Council. The group is anti-choice, anti-gay and against sex education curricula that are not strictly abstinence-only. Local schoolbook censors frequently use Focus on the Family's material when challenging a book or curriculum in the public schools. Focus on the Family split from Gary Bauer's Family Research Council in October 1992.

**Membership:** 2.1 million members.

**Publications:** Ten monthly magazines which include *Focus on the Family*, *Citizen*, *Parental Guidance*, *Clubhouse* and *Clubhouse Jr.* reach an estimated three million homes. Focus on the Family also publishes a variety of books.

**Radio:** FOF broadcasts "Family News in Focus," a daily radio show heard on more than 1,500 facilities, and the daily one-half hour "Focus on the Family" program, which reaches about 5 million listeners each week.

**Finances:** \$114 million annual budget.

[http://www.foff.org/news/right/leg\\_group.htm](http://www.foff.org/news/right/leg_group.htm)

**Staff:** About 1,300

**Quotes from James Dobson:** "Co-educational sex education sheds children, girls especially, of natural modesty." (Barren County, KY *Progress*, 8/31/89)

"Does the Republican Party want our votes, no strings attached—to court us every two years, and then to say, 'Don't call me; I'll call you'—and to not care about the moral law of the universe?...Is that what they want? Is that the way the system works? Is this the way it's going to be? If it is, I'm gone, and if I go, I will do everything I can to take as many people with me as possible." (Statement from 2/7/98 Council for National Policy meeting, Wash. Times 2/17/98)

3/98

### **Free Congress Foundation**

717 Second St., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 546-3000  
Internet address: [www.fcraf.org](http://www.fcraf.org)

**President:** Paul Weyrich  
**Date of founding:** 1977

**Activities:** Paul Weyrich, president of Free Congress, has had a long history with the Religious Right. He helped draft Rev. Jerry Falwell to head the Moral Majority, and founded the Heritage Foundation. After less than a year at the Heritage Foundation, Weyrich went on to establish the Free Congress Foundation (FCF). During the early 1980s, the foundation had a reputation as being a pacesetter for Religious Right politics, in part because of the coalitions which operated under the group's umbrella project, Coalitions for America. These coalitions cooperated to draft legislation, plan media strategies, and exchange ideas and research.

FCF is a research and education organization aggressively involved in grassroots activism. The group pioneered America's Voice (formerly

[http://www.pfaa.org/issues/right/dg\\_group.shtml](http://www.pfaa.org/issues/right/dg_group.shtml)

known as National Empowerment Television), a cable network designed to rapidly mobilize Religious Right followers for grassroots lobbying.

The foundation also has formed the Judicial Selection Monitoring Project, which lobbies for the appointment of judicial conservatives to the federal courts. In addition, the project seeks to establish an extensive national network that can be ready to organize support for conservative appointees to the courts and opposition to moderate or liberal appointees.

**Finances:** Income is over \$9 million.

**TV:** America's Voice reaches an estimated 11 million viewers and its annual budget is \$6 million. Paul Weyrich stepped down as president of the network in late 1997 after being asked to resign.

Some of America's Voice programs include "Direct Line with Paul Weyrich," "The Michael Reagan Show," and the "Christian Coalition Weekly."

Internet address for America's Voice: [www.americasvoice.com](http://www.americasvoice.com)

**Quotes from Paul Weyrich:** "We need to get active at the local level. We will never control the situation in Washington until we control the situation back home." (*National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy*, Winter 1990)

3/98

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### **National Right to Life Committee**

419 7th St. NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 626-8800  
Internet address: [www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org)

**President:** Wanda Franz  
**Executive Director:** David O'Steen  
**Date of founding:** 1973

[http://www.pfaw.org/issues/right/  
np\\_groups.shtml](http://www.pfaw.org/issues/right/np_groups.shtml)

**Activities:** The nation's largest anti-abortion rights organization, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) has a political action committee and educational trust fund. One of the main goals of the organization is the passage of a constitutional amendment banning abortion. The Committee campaigned heavily against the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) the summer of 1992. NRLC is also active in such issues as euthanasia, infanticide, fetal experimentation and in vitro fertilization. The Committee opposes RU-486 (mifepristone) and some forms of contraceptives, including "the pill."

**Membership:** 7 million.

**State chapters:** More than 3,000 local chapters in all 50 states.

**Publication:** *National Right to Life News* (monthly newsletter).

**Finances:** NRLC's annual budget is \$12 million.

3/98

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### Operation Rescue National

P.O. Box 740066  
Dallas, TX 75374  
(214) 348-8866  
Internet address: [www.orn.org](http://www.orn.org)

Executive Director: Flip Benham  
Founder: Randall Terry

**Activities:** Operation Rescue National (ORN), an anti-abortion group whose influence has declined since its inception, is still involved with direct action against abortion clinics. The group used to conduct weeks-long "rescues" at family-planning clinics in targeted cities, at which protesters blockade clinics and verbally and physically harass patients. ORN has developed programs targeting grassroots activists. One example is the "Impact Team Program" which trained activists in local communities to manage their own protests.

[http://www.orn.org/issues/right-to-life\\_group.shtml](http://www.orn.org/issues/right-to-life_group.shtml)

In February of 1994, Reverend Keith Tucci resigned as Executive Director and Flip Benham stepped in to take his place and moved the group's headquarters to Dallas, Texas. Since the resignation of Tucci, ORN has been distancing themselves from the more radical antiabortion activists who condone violence. Their recent protests have met with little publicity and have had low attendance. Numerous court fines and judgments have been levied against ORN and its leaders in the past few years. Yet little of the money owed by ORN has been collected, since finding the group's assets has proven difficult. Officials in Dallas, however, were successful in seizing furniture, computers, and office equipment from ORN's headquarters in April of 1995. Additionally, the group was recently fined \$10 million as a result of a 1993 lawsuit.

In 1997, ORN started a "Back to School" campaign. In an attempt to dissuade teens from having abortions, ORN activists displayed gruesome photos of aborted fetuses outside several high schools across the country. This campaign ended up backfiring in early 1998 when Flip Benham was arrested and sentenced to six months of jail after leading a protest at a Lynchburg, VA high school. Benham, along with a group of 150 Liberty University students, harassed high school students saying that they would go to Hell if they did not save unborn babies and accept Jesus Christ as their savior.

**Membership:** Was up to 35,000 in 1989 (*WP*, 11/24/91).

**Publication:** *Operation Rescue National* (monthly newsletter)

**Radio:** Randall Terry has his own call-in talk radio show, "Randall Terry Live" which airs five days a week for one hour.

**Finances:** 1992's budget was about \$400,000. The group has been repeatedly fined by the courts, and according to one estimate it owes about \$2 million in fines and legal fees.

**Quotes from Randall Terry and Operation Rescue:** "Christians beware... To vote for Bill Clinton is to sin against God. (OR pamphlet, 10/92)

"[The judiciary is] the lap dog of the death industry." (Fresno, CA Bee, 8/20/89)

"Blackmun and Stevens are enemies of Christ. When history's final editorial light is cast upon them 50 or 100 years from now, they're going to be remembered with Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin."  
(*Christianity Today*, 9/10/90)

"People have got to ask themselves . . . what kind of America do we want? What principles do we want guiding this country's education, judiciary? We want biblical principles. Because if we don't have biblical principles, we have heathenism. We have anything goes! We have humanism! We could have barbarism!" (*A Call to Action*, 5/9/91)

3/98

### **Traditional Values Coalition**

100 S. Anaheim Blvd., Suite 320  
Anaheim, CA 92805  
(714) 520-0300  
Internet address: [www.traditionalvalues.org](http://www.traditionalvalues.org)

**Chairman:** Rev. Louis Sheldon  
**Date of founding:** 1981

**Activities:** The coalition opposes gay rights, reproductive freedom, the teaching of evolution in the public schools and sex education that does not stress abstinence to the exclusion of information on birth control and disease prevention. It was active in battles over constitutional amendments outlawing civil rights protections for gays and lesbians in Colorado and Oregon. TVC has also helped organized anti-gay initiatives in California, Arizona, Missouri, and Washington. The group was also instrumental in convincing the California State Board of Education to reject a health education curriculum that touched on such subjects as homosexuality and AIDS.

**Membership:** 32,000 churches nationwide representing about 12 denominations.

**State chapters:** 20 state chapters and an office in Washington, D.C.

**Finances:** \$2 million annual budget.

[http://www.pew.org/issues/right/bg\\_group.shtml](http://www.pew.org/issues/right/bg_group.shtml)



**APPENDIX B. ORDER TO WITHDRAW RECORDS**

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE [REDACTED]  
IN AND FOR [REDACTED]

<p>[REDACTED] Plaintiff,  vs. [REDACTED] Defendant.</p>	<p>CASE NO. [REDACTED]  <b>ORDER TO WITHDRAW RECORDS</b></p>
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NOW on this 29th day of December, 1971, the Clerk is hereby  
ordered to allow Leland Lewis  
Attorney at Law, to withdraw from the Clerk's office the following records:  
Exhibits 3 (1-4), 16, 19, 22, 28, 30, 30 and 31  
Transcript of proceedings  
  
for a period not to exceed 1 days from the date of this order.

[REDACTED]  
JUDGE

**APPENDIX C. HUMAN SUBJECTS RELEASE**

Last name of Principal Investigator Larsen**Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule**

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☒ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
- a) the purpose of the research
  - b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 17)
  - c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research
  - d) if applicable, the location of the research activity
  - e) how you will ensure confidentiality
  - f) in a longitudinal study, when and how you will contact subjects later
  - g) that participation is voluntary, nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject
13. ☒ Signed consent form (if applicable)
14. ☐ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)
15. ☐ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

First contact

Last contact

June 6, 1998October 31, 1998

Month/Day/Year

Month/Day/Year

17. If applicable, anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

Month/Day/Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

Date

Department or Administrative Unit

David C. Roberts5/7/98DEO

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

☒ Project approved☐ Project not approved☐ No action requiredPatricia M. Keith

Name of Committee Chairperson

10-1-98

Date

PM Keith

Signature of Committee Chairperson

**APPENDIX D. INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Consent Form**  
**"Historical Case Study of Stress and the Superintendent"**

Leonard V. Larsen

(in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctorate in Education,  
 Fall-spring, 1999-2000, Iowa State University)

You are invited to participate in a qualitative study undertaken to generate data for the researcher's doctoral dissertation. This study will explore the internal and external forces exerted upon a superintendent the early 1990's. I am interested in developing description and analysis of this historical case. Data collection for this study will take place during the fall and spring semesters of 1999-00.

I will ask you to participate in one to two interviews. Interviews will be documented using audiotape and researcher notes and will last approximately 30-50 minutes. I will also preserve scripts of any e-mail conversations conducted to review interview material for accuracy. You will have the opportunity to provide feedback on my developing analysis of the information I gather.

Your participation is confidential and this confidentiality will be maintained through: data and notes remaining accessible only to the researcher, removal of personally identifiable information from notes and transcripts, and use of pseudonyms for people, places, and organizations in written reports and oral presentations of this research. Dates will be represented in general terms to anonymize the study.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you as a participant in this research. If the topic of suicide should cause uneasiness, a 24-hour telephone service is available for you to speak with a therapist at the Richmond Center at 515-232-5811 Ames, Iowa or you can contact the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) or 888-333-2377 for a listing of support groups in your area.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time or decline to participate in certain portions of the study. If you withdraw, I will destroy the transcripts and fieldnotes of your data.

If at any time you have questions about this researcher and/or your participation, please contact me at 3158 South Dakota Avenue, Ames, IA 50014, [lvlarsen@hotmail.com](mailto:lvlarsen@hotmail.com) or 515-292-1664.

I consent to participate in the research study named and described above.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(One copy to participant and one copy to the researcher)

**APPENDIX E. MENU OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

The questions used in the research interviews will contain the actual names of people and places. When reporting the data and displaying the human subject forms in the appendix of the report, bracketed names or places will be replaced with pseudonyms. The number of questions selected by the researcher will vary with the type of data to be collected from the individual participant.

#### **Interview Questions**

##### **1. Opening questions**

1. What is your name,
2. mailing address,
3. e-mail address,
4. and telephone number?
5. How did you know [Mr. Derts]?
6. What community or educational positions did you hold in the early 1990s?

**Time                      date**

##### **2. What was the role of organized and unorganized forces in the local community, state and nation acting on the superintendent?**

1. How would you summarize the state's involved in encouraging school districts to adopt OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
2. Would you rate OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION a moderate or extreme controversy in the [[Black Rock]] School District?
3. What type of positive support did [Mr. Derts] receive in and outside the school system?
4. What can you tell me about the [State] Success Network and the work of educational experts in this state?



5. How would you describe the role of the business community in regard to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  6. How were you involved in the issue of OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  7. What type of actions indicated the active role of school board members in regard to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  8. How would you summarize the role of outside experts and networks in promoting OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  9. How would you rate the role of the press in the OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION controversy?
  10. How would you describe the role of the ministerial association in regard to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  11. What steps did the state take to prepare the schools for the acceptance of OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  12. What ways illustrated how the public was involved in the school at this time period?
  13. Would you describe the members within the religious community who became critics of OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  14. Did the term "right-wing Christian fundamentalists" accurately describe the religious community members opposed to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  15. Would you identify the roles of the people who came to [Mr. Derts]'s office to express their opinions about OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  16. How was OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION viewed on the statewide level?
- 3. What stress factors did the [Black Rock] superintendent face in the early 1990s?**
1. Would you relate any incidents where [Mr. Derts] was subjected to stresses associated with the job beyond the day-to-day ordinary stresses of the job?

2. What type of concern or fears were expressed by the people and organizations opposing OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  3. Would you describe any incidents when [Mr. Derts] was approached by members of the community during the month of April?
  4. Were you aware of any strategies [Mr. Derts] manage his job stresses?
  5. Do you recall how [Mr. Derts] dealt with antagonistic people?
  6. What types of community pressure with respect to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION did you observe?
  7. How would you describe the type of tactics used to discourage support in OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  8. How would you describe the level of trust within and outside the school district?
  9. Do you recall if [Mr. Derts] made friends outside the educational community?
  10. What events suggest how strongly [Mr. Derts] supported OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
  11. What cases would illustrate how [Mr. Derts] personally took criticism of his role as superintendent?
  12. Would you support the statement that [Mr. Derts] was the type of person who handled criticism well?
  13. Could you describe any times when [Mr. Derts] became indecisive as a school leader?
- 4. Were the stress factors representative of the same factors found in a review of the literature?**
1. What was your perception of the OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION controversy?
  2. How would you define day-to-day stresses?
  3. How would you define the role of a school superintendent?

4. How well did [Mr. Derts]'s actions appear to fit your definition of a superintendent?
5. Would you describe examples of emotional displays by the people in the system and the community related to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
5. Did the [Black Rock] superintendent's death by suicide result from mental stresses placed upon him in the course of his superintendency?
1. What actions would make you support that [Mr. Derts]'s identification as a Christian was important to him?
2. What incidents portray changes in [Mr. Derts]'s behavior in the spring of 199\_?
3. What actions were displayed by [Mr. Derts] to indicate the importance of his professional identification as the superintendent?
4. Do you recall any situations when the sincerity of [Mr. Derts]'s Christian faith was questioned by others in public?
5. Can you recall and identify any other issues in the district that caused unusual stress for [Mr. Derts] can you recall?
6. Would you describe public challenges to his religious beliefs or values with regard to OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION?
7. Would you ever describe the controversy as constituting a dangerous situation?
8. Why would you think that [Mr. Derts] was serious about leaving his job as superintendent?
9. What examples would you select to describe [Mr. Derts]'s administrative style?
10. What examples illustrate [Mr. Derts]'s skills in dealing with people?
11. How did other people in the system share leadership responsibilities with [Mr. Derts]?

12. What examples illustrated the strengths and/or weaknesses exhibited by [Mr. Derts] as a superintendent?

**6. Ending Questions**

1. How would you explain [Mr. Derts]'s final act?
2. What other people would you suggest would be helpful in providing information for this study?
3. Do you know of any documents or artifacts that would be helpful in exploring this study?

**APPENDIX F. REQUEST FOR COPIES OF RECORDS**



DISTRICT COURT

IN AND FOR  
COURTHOUSE

## APPLICATION FOR RECORD COPIES

Type of Case: Criminal \_\_\_\_\_ Civil ☒ Probate \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Title: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Plaintiff/Petitioner) (Defendant/Respondent)

Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_

What exactly do you want copied? Please be specific.

Exh. 1 Page 9, 3a 1-8, 3b 1-8, 3c 1-5, 3d 1-5, 3e 1-5, 3f 1-10, 3g 1-5, 3h 1-5, 3i 1-8

Exh. 16 We only have \_\_\_\_\_ records on file. If the information you have requested are in the file, copies will be twenty five cents (\$ .25) per page. If the information you request is on microfilm, copies are a minimum of four dollars (\$4.00) or fifty cents (\$ .50) per page, whichever is greater. Computer generated copies are fifty cents (\$ .50) per page. An additional fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) is required for certification and seal for each document. Please make checks payable to: Clerk of District Court. Copies must be paid for at time of request.

Exh. 21 1-13 Number of copies requested: \_\_\_\_\_. Do you want to pick up the copies or have them mailed mailed. If mailed, one dollar (\$1.00) for mailing costs, in addition to copy fees, is to be paid in advance.

Exh. 27 1-12 Record copies are normally mailed within two work days or they can be picked up the next work day, after 11:00 a.m. If you want your copies mailed, where do you want them sent?

Exh. 28 1-8 Name: Leonard Larsen  
Address: 3158 S. Dakota Ave. Ames IA 50014  
(street number) city state and zip

Exh. 28 1-8 Applicant's signature: Leonard W. Larsen

Date of request: 9/30/97 Daytime telephone: 239-3710

Employee contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Exh. 299

Exh. 25  
3, 4 + 20, 21, 22

Exh. 22  
p. 3, 40-47

PM 10:30  
 [REDACTED]  
 DISTRICT COURT  
 IN AND FOR [REDACTED]  
 COURTHOUSE  
 APPLICATION FOR RECORD COPIES

Type of Case: Criminal \_\_\_\_\_ Civil ☒ Probate \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Title: [REDACTED] vs. [REDACTED]  
 (Plaintiff/Petitioner) (Defendant/Respondent)

Case Number: [REDACTED] Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_

What exactly do you want copied? Please be specific.

7 pages / pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

We only have [REDACTED] records on file. If the information you have requested are in the file, copies will be twenty five cents (\$ .25) per page. If the information you request is on microfilm, copies are a minimum of four dollars (\$4.00) or fifty cents (\$ .50) per page, whichever is greater. Computer generated copies are fifty cents (\$ .50) per page. An additional fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) is required for certification and seal for each document. Please make checks payable to: Clerk of District Court. Copies must be paid for at time of request.

Number of copies requested: 45 copies Do you want to pick up the

copies or have them mailed? If mailed, one dollar (\$1.00) for mailing [REDACTED] in addition to copy fees, is to be paid in advance.

Record copies are normally mailed within 1-2 work days or they can be picked up the next work day. After 11:30 a.m. If you want your copies mailed, where do you want them sent?

Name: Leonard Warren

Address: 3155 South Dakota Ave NW, #104

Applicant's sig. name: [REDACTED]

Date of request: 6/4/92 Date of fee: 6/4/92

Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX G. LIST OF DOCUMENTS**



## List of Documents

Annual Report of Black Rock School District  
State Educational Directory  
 Interview with Kent Duffy, Black Rock School District Board Member  
 Interview with four Black Rock School District Building Principals  
 Interview with Chris Waters, Black Rock School District Program Director  
 Interview with Black Rock School District Transportation Director  
 Interview with Black Rock School District teacher  
 Interview with Family Friend  
 Written interview with Mike Miller, Director of the State Department of Education  
 Interview with Dr. Jones, Director of Global Education  
Industrial Commissioner's Arbitration Decision  
Industrial Commissioner's Appeal Decision  
State District Court Decision  
State Supreme Court Decision  
Derts v. Book Court Decision  
 Ruth Derts's Testimony  
 Chris Waters's Testimony  
 Depositions of two school secretaries, five teachers, five administrators, two school board members, one psychiatrist, three medical experts, and seven superintendents  
 Newspaper articles and editorials from The Black Rock Eagle, The State Times, and The Record  
 State Republican Platform  
 State Education Association Bulletin  
 Medical and death records of Philip Derts

**APPENDIX H. LETTER TO INTERVIEWEES**

April 14, 2000

3158 South Dakota Avenue  
Ames, IA 50014  
515-292-1664  
lvilarsen@hotmail.com

Dear:

I want to thank you for your participation in my research for my dissertation. Your interview was very helpful in generating data. If all goes well, I hope to finish my study in the next two weeks.

As you know, your participation is confidential and this confidentiality will be maintained through: data and notes remaining accessible only to the researcher, removal of personally identifiable information from notes and transcripts, and use of pseudonyms for people, places, and organizations in written reports and oral presentations of this research. Dates will be represented in general terms to anonymize the study.

I have included your quotations that I plan to use in my study. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time or decline to participate in certain portions of the study. If you withdraw, I will destroy the transcripts and fieldnotes of your data.

1. If you wish to withdraw, please inform me.
2. If you think of other information that would clarify your quotations, please write me.
3. If you want to edit your quotation, please mail me your suggestions.
4. If everything looks fine, please e-mail or write OK on this letter and return it to me.
5. If you want to see a copy of my findings, please let me know.

Thank you for all your assistance, your hospitality, and your willingness to share your memories.

Sincerely,

Leonard V. Larsen

Enclosures: Quotations and Stamped Envelope

**APPENDIX I. TREATMENT PLAN**

## TREATMENT PLAN

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES, METHOD, STAFF RESPONSIBLE, TIME FRAME (For each goal list objective(s), staff responsible, and time frame.)**

**SHORT TERM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

**GOAL 1:** Lift him off depression.

**Method:**

- A. Pharmacotherapy
  - 1. Use of antidepressants.
  - 2. Use of anxiolytics

**RESULTS:**

- A. Improved feeling.
- B. Decreased tension.
- C. Improved sleep.
- D. Improved concentration
- E. Improved Appetite.
- F. Better outlook on life.

**B. Psychotherapy.**

- A. Learn to separate personal issues and goals from job expectations.
- B. Resolve religion conflicts and beliefs if at all possible hopefully changing his attitudes may improve his tolerance of the nonacceptance of his plan.
- C. Job issues - meetings to be set up with Board members to assess whether he could get a leave for one semester or so.

**LONG TERM GOALS:**

**Goal #1:** Career planning in other options.

- A. Teaching
- B. Having his own business.
- C. Other jobs he may be interested in.

**Primary Therapist:**

Psychiatrist (if involved in Rx):

CSP Case Manager (if applicable):

CSP Coordinator (if applicable):

Signature of Patient:

or Reviewed with patient on

(This must also be documented in progress note)

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